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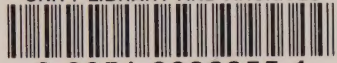
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Scandinavian Drama

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DEATH OF KING

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

22

VOLUME XVII

Of Esaias Tegner's "Frithjofs Saga," a cycle of romances founded on an old Norse legend, one of whose heroes is King Ring, it has been said, "It is probably the most famous of all Norwegian poems, and has been translated twenty-one times into English and nineteen into German."

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DEATH OF KING RING
After an original painting by A. Malmstrom

Of King Ring's death, a story is told
In the old book of the King's Legend
Which has been in King Ring's hand
Since he was a boy, and he has
Kept it close, and no one knows
Where it is, or what it says
And now, when King Ring is dead
And his son is young and new
And his people are all at strife
And his kingdom is in a strife
And his people are all at strife
And his kingdom is in a strife

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Scandinavian Drama

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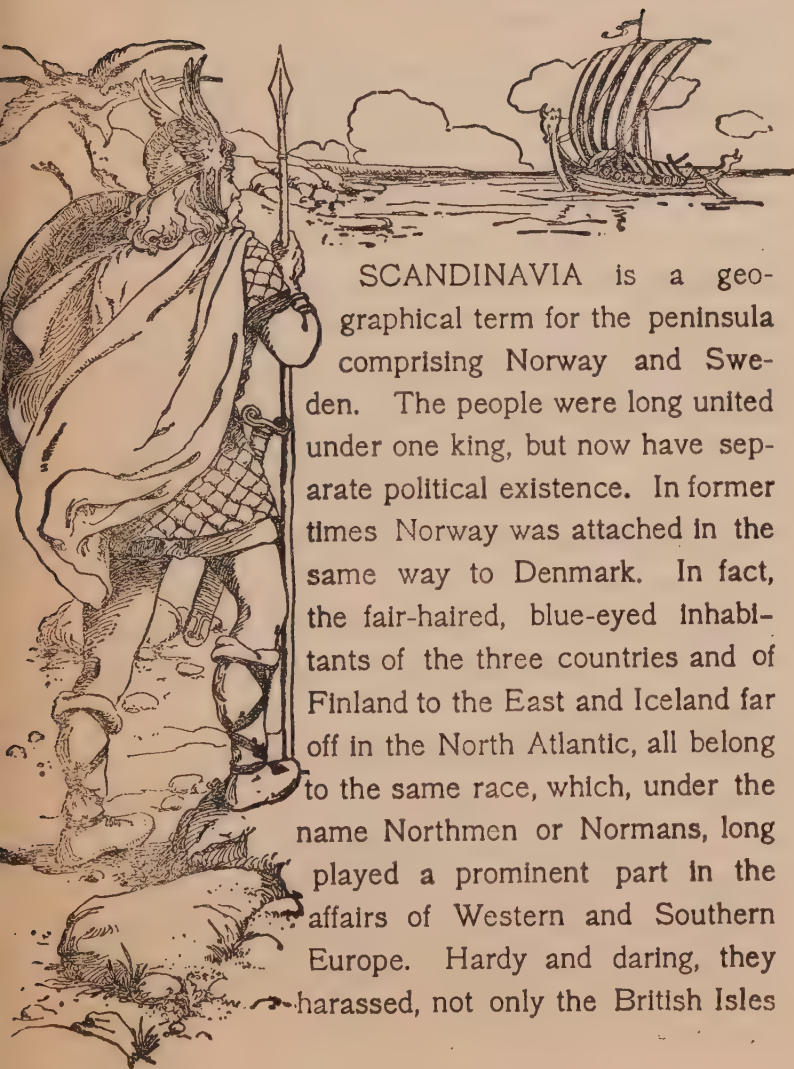
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Prologue



SCANDINAVIA is a geographical term for the peninsula comprising Norway and Sweden. The people were long united under one king, but now have separate political existence. In former times Norway was attached in the same way to Denmark. In fact, the fair-haired, blue-eyed inhabitants of the three countries and of Finland to the East and Iceland far off in the North Atlantic, all belong to the same race, which, under the name Northmen or Normans, long played a prominent part in the affairs of Western and Southern Europe. Hardy and daring, they harassed, not only the British Isles

PROLOGUE

and the Atlantic coast of the continent, but even scoured the Mediterranean and founded a kingdom in Sicily.

Never during those heroic ages did this warlike race, still Pagan, show any fondness for the drama, but, when debarred by storms and wintry weather from actual fighting, they sought pleasure in was-sailing and prolonged feasts, in which the drinking was interspersed with song and saga, the harper's stirring lays and recital of valiant deeds. When they were converted to Christianity, their amusement underwent little change. Yet under its influence the Pagan sagas were proscribed and almost forgotten, though in remote Iceland liberal clerics committed them to writing, and this eventually preserved the mythology of the North to form an important element in modern literature. The Lutheran Reformation drove the old folklore still further into oblivion.

But in the seventeenth century the glory of Louis XIV dazzled all Europe, and in the eighteenth its brilliant shows were imitated in every royal capital. At Copenhagen a theatre was founded in 1720, in which at first translations of Moliere's comedies were performed. But soon the learned

PROLOGUE

Holberg, a native of Norway, was invited to write original plays. He produced twenty comedies, in which the life of the people was so well depicted that they became the accepted standard and rescued the Danish language from literary barrenness. Imitations of French tragedy were still performed until Wessel banished them by his burlesque, *Love Without Stockings*.

Prominent in the Romantic movement at the commencement of the nineteenth century was Oehlenschläger, who revived the long-buried legends of antiquity. His tragedy, *Hakon Jarl*, exhibits the conflict attending the introduction of Christianity. Two Heibergs, father and son, contributed to the national drama. Ingemann also is known outside of Denmark, but it was Hans Christian Andersen whose fairy tales made his name a household word throughout the civilized world. His dramas and novelties were thrown into the background by these charming plays of fancy.

But Norway, which had contributed much to Danish literature, began to grudge her dependent position, and mourned the loss of her native tongue. An earnest effort for independence

PROLOGUE

evoked a new outburst of poetry and drama. Wergeland popularized it with songs and Welhaven gave it critical rules. It reached fruition in Björnson, whose delightful romances have been carried around the world, His dramas are less widely known, but are as dear to his countrymen. In close rivalry came the greater genius, Ibsen, whose dramas have been recognized as belonging not to Norway alone, but to the whole world.

Of this remarkable dramatic literature, like the Northern summer, late in coming, but luxuriant in production, our volume attempts to present a faithful history and exhibit as far as can be done within our narrow limits.

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Scandinavian Drama.

DENMARK, NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

I.

Norse Literature.

The history of the Scandinavian countries does not really begin before the time when Christianity found its way beyond the borders of the North, that is to say, about the opening of the ninth century. Of the prevailing culture before that time we have merely general outlines. Meanwhile the investigations which have recently been carried on by eminent scholars in Scandinavian lands, in every branch of antiquities, have produced results which have constantly increased the sharpness of these outlines, and greatly modified the old theory that the ancient inhabitants of the North were nothing but rude barbarians. We now know that they were not only a warlike race, whose members, in the capacity of vikings, undertook expeditions in the North and far beyond its borders, seeking battle and booty, but that the same mythology, which gives us so vivid a picture of this side of their character, also ascribes to them a high rank in intelligence and morality, and re-

veals a most weird and profound interpretation of the world about them. Moreover, the countless discoveries from the iron age which have come to light in every part of the whole North testify that they appreciated not only feats of arms, but also that they knew in their way how to make life beautiful. In short, we know that, throughout the whole iron age, there prevailed a high state of culture, and the many traditions and songs from the North, which, although they were not committed to writing until after the introduction of Christianity, still belong to a hoary antiquity, afford ample testimony that the spirit of culture lived in the ancestors of the present inhabitants of the North, and that they were not merely vikings.

Icelandic History.

The old Norse literature found its real home in Iceland. In Norway, too, some beautiful buds were produced; but, however important these may be in other respects, they have but little value in a literary point of view as compared with the splendid blossoms that unfolded themselves in that distant island, whose inhabitants have preserved even to this day with loving tenderness the memory of their forefathers. The reason why Iceland, destitute of inhabitants at the time of its discovery, about the middle of the ninth century, became so rapidly settled and secured so eminent a position in the world's history and literature, must be sought in the events which took place in Norway at the time when Harald Fairhair, after a long and ob-

stinate resistance, succeeded in usurping the sovereignty. Many of the powerful men, who hitherto had lived as independent kinglets at their courts, could not and would not submit to the new order of things which the monarch introduced with unrelenting severity. They would rather leave their country than voluntarily recognize him as their superior. They could the more easily accommodate themselves to the seeking of a new fatherland, since the bonds that tied them to the old had already been made more and more loose by the viking expeditions; for these expeditions, which were originally limited to excursions for the purpose of bringing home plunder and fame, had gradually assumed a new character. The vikings went abroad to settle in foreign lands, and there they exercised an important influence upon the culture of the middle ages, supplying the enfeebled peoples of western Europe with new elements of strength. They became the leaders in all directions, not only in war and politics, but also in literature and art. A general spirit of migration had taken possession of the people of the North. While the Danes especially directed their expeditions to England and France, where they at once founded cities and kingdoms; the Norwegians went chiefly to Ireland, Scotland and to the islands north of Great Britain. But the country which above all attracted them, when they abandoned Norway to found new homes, was Iceland.

In the course of sixty years, from 874 to 934, during the so-called "land-taking period," the island became so far populated that it has never since had a larger

population. The people who migrated to Iceland were for the most part the flower of the nation. They went especially from the west coast of Norway, where the peculiar Norse spirit had been most fully developed. Men of the noblest birth set forth with their families and followers to find a home where they might be as free and independent as their fathers were before them. No wonder then that they took with them the cream of the ancient culture of the fatherland.

In the beginning circumstances naturally led to the formation of a number of small, perfectly independent territories. Each chief could take land wherever he found it unoccupied; he could divide it among his subjects as he saw fit, and he could arrange all matters of government very much as he pleased. Out of this patriarchal condition of society there was soon, however, developed a system of laws and institutions that were adopted and approved by all, and therefore binding throughout the country. These were somewhat strict in regard to forms and technicalities, but still they secured to the individual a large measure of freedom. The small communities, which originally were isolated and absolutely independent of one another, soon found it necessary to unite themselves into colonies, with common seats of justice. Then again several colonies would unite in establishing a higher court, and finally, in 930, the Althing was organized as a common parliament for the whole island, presently becoming the heart and centre of the Icelandic republic. These political institutions were admirably calculated to preserve the love and individual liberty and sense of

personal dignity, which noble born settlers from Norway had brought with them, but they also contained in them the germs of the fall of the Republic, since they afforded no protection against the constantly increasing efforts of a few powerful and influential families to get the management of affairs into their own hands. The result was that the country wasted its strength in bloody feuds; so that the Norwegian kings, who already in the beginning of the republic had contemplated the subjugation of the island, at length succeeded in accomplishing their purpose, and in 1263 Iceland was conquered and made tributary to the crown of Norway.

Prominence of Icelandic Literature.

While there is no drama worthy of the name in this barren and sparsely-settled country, its literature is one of the finest in the world, its songs and sagas exercising a powerful influence in western Europe, and especially in Britain, where Scandinavian colonists gave rise to a school of poetry that is not paralleled in any Teutonic language for many centuries later. Of the creations of its golden age of literature it has truly been said that they fill a place none others could take in the highest ranks of Aryan classics. The best of them are distinguished by their pure and strict form, noble heroic subject, and simple, truthful self-control of style and treatment, free from over-wrought sentiment or extravagant passion, and raised equally above euphemism and commonplace, but ever inspired by a weird *Æschylean* power, grim and tender and splendid as that which

breathes through the historical books of the Old Testament, to which the masterpieces of Icelandic literature may be compared.

In regard to this literature, it must be admitted that the priests took a conspicuous part in the intellectual development of the people, and that they were in possession of no inconsiderable amount of culture for that time; but they were not the only people of culture. Toward the end of the eleventh century it is expressly stated that many of the chiefs were so learned that they might, with perfect propriety, have been ordained to the priesthood, and in the twelfth century there were, in addition to those to be found in the cloisters, several private libraries. On the other hand, secular culture, knowledge of law and history, and of the skaldic art were, so to speak, common property. Thus when the means for committing a literature to writing were at hand, the highly developed popular taste for legend history gave to literature the direction which it afterward maintained. The fact is there already existed a considerable literature, which was merely waiting to be put in writing. There existed a choice collection of unwritten books, which had partly accumulated since the first settlement of the island, and had partly been brought over the sea from the mother country, and of which the contents, so far as every important feature is concerned, were faithfully preserved by oral tradition, while doubtless the form had undergone many changes, as is natural when anything is handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

Many causes contributed toward making the Ice-

landers preëminently an historical people. The settlers were men of noble birth, who were proud to trace their descent from kings and heroes of antiquity, nay, even from the gods themselves, and we do not therefore wonder that they assiduously preserved the memory of the deeds of their forefathers, not only through their Sagas, but by other means at their command.

The Elder Edda.

The oldest of Norse poems are preserved in the collection known as the Elder Edda, the contents of which naturally divide themselves into two groups, the mythic and the heroic, those which treat of ancient gods and those which deal with the heroes of antiquity. The first group contains the *Völuspá*, or *Prophecy of the Vala*, a series of grand and poetic pictures of the cardinal features of Norse mythology, beginning with the creation and ending with the destruction and regeneration of the world. Only fragments of this remarkable work have been preserved, including the *Hávamál*, or *Song of the High One*, a didactic poem, or rather series of poems, in which are presented, in terse, vigorous sentences, maxims and rules of conduct that furnish an interesting glimpse of the moral and ethical code of the ancient inhabitants of the North. To the heroic group belong the story of Volund, the Dædalus of Scandinavian legend, and a series of poems describing such men as Helge, the slayer of Hunding, as Brynhild and Gudrun, as the giant women, Fenja and Menja, who ground gold for King Frode. In many

places may be traced the same traditions as those of the *Nibelungen Lied*.

The Younger Edda.

The Younger Edda, also called Snorre's Edda, because its authorship has been attributed to Snorre Sturlason, is a work composed at different times by different persons, for the purpose of serving as a handbook for skalds. It begins with a general synopsis of the saga faith in two parts, and then follows the *Art of Poetry*, in which is a collection of the various kinds of paraphrases used by the skalds, with stanzas of poems quoted by way of illustration. How much of these three parts owes its origin to Snorre has not been determined; but it is certain that he is the author of the fourth division, which is a treatise on the various metres employed in old Norse poetry.

An entire volume, or rather several volumes, might be written on early Norse literature; but this is not our theme. Moreover, as already remarked, eminent scholars have already related all that is best worth relating as to Icelandic skalds and bards, while the sagas of the Northland, extending over two centuries, are becoming almost as well known as the early chronicles of the Anglo-Saxon and other Teutonic races.

Literary Decadence.

Toward the close of the fourteenth century the literary development in Iceland and Norway ceased

almost entirely. When Norway became united with Denmark, the ancient Icelandic Norwegian book-speech died out in the former country; Danish took its place, and from this time Norway also became joined to Denmark in literature. Intellectual culture emanated from the common university in Copenhagen, and bore an exclusively Danish impress. The national movements that were agitated in Norway during her union with Denmark were of slight importance, so far as letters are concerned. Not before the end of the eighteenth century did the national sentiment prevail in literature, and when Norway had established her own university and separated from Denmark, in 1814, she gradually became more independent in literary respects.

In Iceland alone the ancient tongue survived, and there it has continued to be spoken even to this day, the language having suffered but few and unimportant changes, and these chiefly limited to pronunciation. After the temporary cessation of literary activity, there sprang up a new literature, which in its main features gradually approached the general current of European thought, but still was more or less a continuation of the old Norse development, or was at least closely related to it.

Adverse Influences.

The conditions under which this new literature grew up were anything but favorable. Again and again the island was visited by epidemics, volcanic eruptions, famine and plague, which devastated the

country. Most terribly did the Black Death rage here in 1402-1404, killing two-thirds of the inhabitants, who, before this scourge came upon them, numbered 120,000 to 130,000—a loss from which the island has never since recovered. About the close of the sixteenth century came an invasion of pirates, and most disastrous of all was the latter half of the eighteenth, with its small-pox, its famine, its disease among live-stock and its awful volcanic eruptions. The present population of Iceland is not more than 80,000; for the severe climate made, and still makes, life there a hard struggle for existence.

To return to the literature of Iceland, from the close of the fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century progress was very slight, the revival being brought about through the introduction of printing by Jon Arason, Iceland's last Catholic bishop. It was the purpose of this strong-willed man to use the press as a weapon against the Reformation; but here, as elsewhere, it became the most potent agency for promoting its cause, and with it intellectual life began to blossom anew. The first translation of the New Testament was by Odd Gudiskalksson, who was well acquainted with Luther and his doctrines. It was published at Copenhagen in 1540, but the entire Bible was not rendered into the Icelandic tongue until 1584.

The Learned Epoch.

The close of the sixteenth and the whole of the seventeenth century embrace what is termed "the

learned epoch of the North," during which the Icelanders took their full share in the intellectual activity of Scandinavia. Especially did they exert themselves in thoroughly investigating scholarly works on the old Norse and Icelandic sagas. Though they did not produce them, their interest in the old saga literature never flagged, and they preserved and multiplied the old documents by copying them, as in the middle ages the monks preserved the Greek and Roman classics. Yet little of value was accomplished until printing and the Reformation had time to quicken intellectual activities and to give impulse to new and vigorous productions on the basis of the monuments of the past.

Rímas.

The art of poetry, which played so conspicuous a part in mediæval Iceland, awoke to new life after its long slumber. Except for the Latin poetry of the learned period, the Icelanders here also held their own as compared with other people, and several scholars could be mentioned who even ranked high for skill in writing Latin verse. The production of poetry in the vernacular was never wholly interrupted, but after the ancient literature had ceased to bloom, it continued in that peculiar form of ballad called the *Rima*, of which mention has been made in connection with the old skaldic lays. Many of these poems, and not a few of the sagas, are strongly dramatic in character, while belonging to an earlier period are the dramatic poems of *Hyting of Loki*, the *Lay of Skirni*, the *Lay of Harbard*,

and the lay which underlies the story of Ivar's death in the *Skioldunga Saga*.

Modern Poetry.

The number of Icelandic poets, who have justly been held in high esteem by their people, is so large that even a list of them would be extremely cumbersome. A catalogue of modern Icelandic poets would embrace every one who in any way has been conspicuous. On the one hand it is true that not a single modern poet has made poetry the chief vocation of his life, but on the other all the literary men have also been poets. The lyric poet Stefan Olafsson, who lived between 1620 and 1688, must be considered the father of modern Icelandic poetry. Of his numerous works many are remarkable for their sparkling wit and rugged humor, while in others idyllic sentiments prevail. Eggert Olafsson, who belongs to the eighteenth century and who distinguished himself in other literary fields, was also a poet of decided merit, and in his cycle had only one rival for the position of Icelandic laureate. This was Jon Thorlaksson, whose original poems are marvellous for their freshness and keen wit, and who also produced a masterly translation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and of Klopstock's *Messias*. The greatest poet of the nineteenth century, and perhaps in the whole field of modern Icelandic poetry, is Bjarne Thor Arneson, who in many of his poems displays a startling brilliancy, while he is at the same time exceedingly profound and often touching and tender.

The original and strongly marked character of Icelandic poetry has not in any way lessened the taste for productions in other forms and in other lands. Besides the chief productions of Milton and Klopstock, there are also fine Icelandic translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, of a series of Shakespeare's dramas, of the *Arabian Nights* and other famous and popular works.

In conclusion it may be remarked, as to the history of Icelandic literature, that it has no dialects, and this we may attribute to the lack of any such conditions as, during the middle ages, produced a great variety of dialects in England, France and Germany. Here was no town life, with its guilds and varied interests, its great corporations, legal and ecclesiastical, which sometimes, as in England, allowed the upper classes to use a separate foreign language. In early times, before the Danish conquest, there were no dialects because, life being simple, king and serf, soldier and peasant, merchant and priest must live and speak alike. So, in our own day, we see the newspaper, the state school, the railway, the conscription and the theatre, all tending to bring about in each great European state a sameness of life, thought and speech through every nook and corner of its area.

Icelandic Drama.

Conditions are extremely unfavorable for the production of dramatic literature, for only about 3,000 people live in its metropolis of Reykjavik, no other town having more than a few hundred inhabitants. Neverthe-

less, several remarkable efforts have been made during the nineteenth century in the field of the drama, especially by Sigurd Pjetursson, who produced several comedies, the best of which is *Narfi*, a satire on the Danish party in Iceland. Mathias Jochumsson and Endride Einarsson have also written beautiful and original dramas founded on Icelandic popular tales.

Early Danish Drama.

The language of Denmark is derived from the same source as that of Sweden, and the parent of both is the old Scandinavian or Icelandic. Between 1100 and 1400 what is known as old Danish was gradually undergoing the changes which transformed it into the modern tongue. In the fifteenth century the influence of German was supreme, culminating in the Reformation, and toward the close of the seventeenth, the work of development was completed, leaving the language almost as we find it at the present day. In the middle ages the only Danish literature consisted of ballads, treating of the heroic adventures of great warriors and describing the lovely women of the chivalric age in strains of artless but often exquisite beauty. Before the introduction of printing, these became gradually modernized through oral tradition, and the language in which we have received them belongs chiefly to the sixteenth century. The only complete collection is that of Svend Grundtvig, published at Copenhagen in 1853. It was not until 1490 that the first printing press was set up in Denmark, and five years later the first Danish

work was published—a history of Denmark in rhymed Danish verse. But here we need not linger further over its early literature.

Holberg.

During the seventeenth century vigorous efforts were made and valuable results attained in Danish literature; but the decisive impulse was given to the literary activities of the country by Ludvig Holberg, who, besides being a poet and historian, was the first Scandinavian dramatist whose plays found acceptance on the stage. He not only cleared the ground and winnowed away a vast amount of rubbish which had hindered the development of intellectual life, but, what was of chief importance, the barriers were thrown down that had for centuries separated the people from the learned class, which the Reformation, with its fresh breath sweeping through the northern lands, had not been able to remove, but which yielded to Holberg's powerful attacks, never to rise again. Of course, this could not be entirely achieved by a single man; it needed the efforts of a whole generation; but the first strong impulse was given by Holberg.

He was born in Bergen, Norway, December 3, 1684. His father had risen from the ranks to a lieutenant-colonelcy, and Ludvig, who was the youngest of twelve children, was, according to the custom of the time, intended from childhood for the army. But the boy evinced such decided distaste for military life that his parents yielded to his desires, and sent him to the Bergen Latin school. Later he entered the Copen-

hagen university; but being destitute of means, he was unable to continue his studies and, returning to Norway, became private tutor in the house of a country parson. He afterward returned to Copenhagen for the purpose of passing his theological examination, whereupon he again accepted a tutorship, this time in the house of a Bergen clergyman. The latter had travelled much and kept a diary of his journeys, the perusal of which aroused in Holberg an irresistible desire of seeing the world, and, with a very slender purse, he set out for Holland, hoping to earn his living by teaching. But he found that the Dutch cared little for learning, the most accomplished professor ranking lower than a common skipper, and the experiment proved unprofitable. Nothing daunted, however, he determined to make the best of the situation. To Bergen he would not return for fear of being laughed at on account of his failure; so he lived for a short time as a teacher of languages in Christianssand, where such were his linguistic attainments and talents that he became known as "Mithridates," who, as history tells us, spoke in two and twenty tongues. As soon as he had accumulated a little money, he took leave of Norway, which he never saw again, and went to Oxford, England, where he remained for some years, was a constant visitor to its libraries, and devoted himself to the study of history.

On his return from England he began to give private lectures in Copenhagen, which brought him plenty of listeners but no money, and now he once more accepted a position as private tutor, one which gave him an opportunity of making a trip to Germany. Finally

he was admitted to a college for poor students and graduates, and thus, after many struggles, was enabled to complete his education, devoting himself exclusively to his studies and to utilizing the materials which he had so diligently collected.

Holberg's Peder Paars.

After some historical works, which gained for him a professorship in the Copenhagen university, he published, under the pseudonym of Hans Mikkelssen, brewer, which he afterward retained, a comical heroic poem, whose theme was a grocer of Kallundborg, one Peder Paars, who, on his journey to Aars, where he was going to visit his betrothed, is shipwrecked on the island of Anholt in the Kattegat, and has to pass through many strange experiences. It was originally intended as a parody on ancient and modern poems, particularly on the epics of Homer and Virgil, which, on account of their variety of illustrations and fantastic figures, seemed very ridiculous to the sober and prosy intellect of the eighteenth century, while the conventional epic style appeared bombastic and pedantic in the eyes of the men of that period.

The several cantos of the epic appeared in rapid succession and created an extraordinary sensation, though few were able to appreciate their real significance as an impersonal and general satire. Some became angry, felt themselves hurt, interpreted the ridicule, which had been aimed at a class to which they chanced to belong, as directed against themselves per-

sonally, and the matter might easily have resulted in serious consequences to Holberg. A certain Friederick Rostgaard, a landed proprietor on the island of Anholt, happened to be among those most incensed, though he was, according to the standard of the time, a man of great culture and a profound student of art. Rostgaard was particularly offended at Holberg's description of the inhabitants of Anholt, of whom he had said that they led a Christian life and maintained themselves honestly by shipwrecks—just as so many of the dwellers on the seaboard had done in the good old times of yore. Rostgaard complained in person to King Frederick IV on the appearance of the first canto, and insisted that the poem should be burned by the hangman, as a libellous and indecent work, and that the author should be punished according to the full rigor of the law, as a frivolous satirist, "who has scandalized the poor country of Anholt, including its priest and bailiff, with a false, unchristian spirit, thus disgracing their ancestors, fellow-citizens and descendants." But the matter ended more satisfactorily than it promised. The king caused the book to be read to him, and found that it was a "harmless, amusing work," and the state council acquitted the author by a message, in which it was stated, however, that it would have been better if the book had never been printed.

Holberg's Plays.

In 1720 Étienne Capion, a member of a French theatrical company which had been giving represen-

tations at the court, obtained the privilege of building a theatre at Copenhagen, where at first French and German plays alternated. Two years later permission was granted to the French actor, René Montaignu, "to arrange and act comedies in the Danish language." He, therefore, associated himself with Capion, and on the 23d of September, 1722, the Danish national theatre was opened with a translation of Molière's *Avare*. In order to secure original plays, they now addressed themselves to the author of *Peder Paars*, and found him willing and ready for the task. In the same year he furnished five plays, and in the course of a few years had written more than twenty. Still the theatre was not a financial success, and the greatest effort was necessary to sustain it. When, in 1728, Copenhagen was visited by a great conflagration, and when, a few years later, the puritanic king, Christian VI, ascended the throne, the taste for the theatre died away, and there was, for the present, an end to the writing of plays, Holberg composing for the last night's performance the *Funeral of Danish Comedy*.

In Holberg's dramatic works the germs of comedy, which were already to be found in *Peder Paars*, are further developed. As in this poem, so in the comedies, we encounter a multitude of typical characters taken from the daily life of that period and painted with such fresh and vivid colors that Oehlenschläger remarks: "If Copenhagen had been buried beneath the ground and Holberg's comedies had remained, we should nevertheless have known the life that stirred within its walls, not only in broad outlines, but also

in many of its minutest details." We here make the acquaintance of the political tinker, Herman von Bremenfeld, whose head had been turned by politics to such a degree that he neglects his work. We further find Jean de France, or Hans Fransen, as he was called before he went to Paris, and who afterward is filled with conceits of all sorts; then the boasting, blustering soldier, Jakob von Thybo; the peasant Rasmus Berg, or Erasmus Montanus, whom a stay at the university of Copenhagen has turned into a conceited fool, and many other characters from the life of the metropolis. The *Barselstue*, or *Lying-in Room*, introduces us to a whole gallery of exquisite female characters, in which the everlasting feminine element has been comically illustrated and diversified in a truly masterly manner.

The pitiable lot of the Danish peasantry, kept down in the basest servitude, has been described in a plastic manner in *Jeppe paa Berget*. We have here a peasant endowed by nature with excellent parts, who, under the terrible oppression resting on his class, has become the very incarnation of wretchedness, and makes in many respects a tragical impression, since, in spite of the irresistible and sparkling humor of the play, we are not able for a moment to lose sight of the contrast between what the peasant under different circumstances might have been and the deep debasement in which we now behold him. This comedy gives one of the most striking pictures of life that any literature can boast. Among character plays of general interest, *The Restless Man* and *The Fickle Woman*, and, among

others, *Henrik and Pernille* and *Maskeraden* are specially to be mentioned.

It is, however, no easy matter to classify Holberg's comedies in groups. Most of them have in common not only a leading character—a person with some striking weakness, or some individual characteristic of the age—but also the secondary figures, which, though constantly recurring, are diversified with great skill and humor—the dignified parent, the cunning servant, the simple domestic, the lovers and the rest—and all are drawn with remarkable distinctness. Every comedy teems with genuine wit and with exquisite, though sometimes rather broad, humor. This exuberant humor was combined with a most profound psychological insight, and all the plays abound in traits that evince a rare knowledge of human nature.

Holberg's prolonged stay abroad opened the eyes of a man endowed with a gift of keen observation to all that was ridiculous and small in the social life of Denmark. Abroad he also became acquainted with a new dramatic form, and when once the impulse from without had been given, the great dramatist had it entirely in his power to paint the men of his time as they lived and moved, and to paint them in such a manner as to give his works a permanent value, since, in addition to the particular coloring belonging to the times and the circumstances, they also embody the common and permanent human element. Like his predecessor, Molière, he does not hesitate to take his materials wherever he can find them, and thus he has borrowed not only from the French and from the Italian, but

also from Plautus and Terence. His creative talent never forsakes him, however, and what he borrows he always takes, like the true artist, to use in such a manner as to blend with his own materials, and through this very blending acquire its true lustre. And yet the poetical point of view was to Holberg a subordinate one. The most important aim was a "good and useful moral," and for this end he created his play.

When the theatre was reopened, on the accession of Frederick V, Holberg was again requested to write for it, and he accordingly furnished several new plays, including *Plutus*, *Abracadabra*, and *Republiken*; but his creative energy was now on the wane, and these plays can in no wise be compared with his earlier comedies. He closed his dramatic career by publishing, in 1731, his acted comedies, with the addition of five others which he had no opportunity of putting on the stage.

By his vast literary activity Holberg had gradually accumulated a considerable fortune, which was all the more easy for him as he continued to live singly and with so great economy that he has been accused of avarice. But in this respect he has been misjudged; for he subjected himself to every manner of privation from the most generous motive, desiring to accumulate the means for erecting an institution of great importance to his country. He first thought of founding a learned society for the advancement of the Danish language, but finally resolved to bequeath his wealth to the Soro academy, built by Christian IV for the purpose of counteracting the custom of the nobles of sending

their sons abroad to be educated. After a brief existence, the academy had been closed in 1665; but throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century many of Denmark's most distinguished scholars found here their proper sphere of activity.

Holberg's Prominence.

In 1747 Holberg was made a noble, but the honor, if ever he cared for it, came too late in life to be of much service; for he died a few years afterward, at the age of sixty-nine, and was buried in the Soro church. His influence on the literature and on the whole intellectual life of Denmark cannot be overestimated.

Not only was Holberg the founder of Danish literature and the greatest of Danish authors, but he was, with the exception of Voltaire, the first writer in Europe during his own generation. Neither Pope nor Swift, who, perhaps, excelled him in special branches, approached him in range of genius, or in encyclopædic versatility. Holberg found Denmark unprovided with books, and he wrote a library for her. When he arrived in the country, the Danish language was seldom heard in a gentleman's house. Polite Danes were wont to say that a man wrote Latin to his friends, talked French to the ladies, called his dogs in German, and only used Danish to swear at his servants. The single genius of Holberg revolutionized this system. He wrote poems of all kinds in a language before employed only for ballads and hymns; he established a theatre and composed for it a rich collection of comedies; he

filled the bookshelves of the citizens with works in their own tongue on history, law, politics, science, philosophy and philology, all written in a true and virile style, and representing the extreme attainment of European culture at the moment. Perhaps no author who ever lived has exercised so vast an influence over his countrymen, an influence that, after the lapse of two and a half centuries, is still actively at work, and assuredly it is an influence for good.

The Age of Enlightenment.

After the death of Holberg there was no lack of eminent men in various departments of literature, as the poets Christian Falster, Jörgen Sorterup, Ambrosius Stub, and Hans Adolph Brorson, as the historians Hans Gram, Jakob Langebek, and Peder Frederik Suhm, as Kund Lyne Rahbek, best known as a writer on æsthetics, but also as a critic, playwright and theatrical manager. The drama, however, was poorly represented in the great intellectual movement—the age of enlightenment it has been called—which marked the close of the eighteenth and the opening of the nineteenth century. The main struggle, which extended throughout Europe, was between free thought and orthodoxy, and was finally compromised under the designation of rationalism. When free thought, which was essentially hostile to Christianity, invaded Denmark, it caused no little fermentation. After so long a period of servitude, the spirit of men seized with eagerness the new and dazzling, though hollow tenets of the for-

eign philosophers, and literature began to be filled with a mockery and blasphemy that even Holberg, though himself a free-thinker, and doubtless contributing toward the movement, could never have dreamed would gain admittance among a people whom he found wrapped in the profoundest slumber. The movement had entered Denmark from abroad. Foreign scholars and poets, chiefly German and French, were invited in large numbers, or came of their own accord, to spread the new doctrine. These foreigners were favored in every possible manner by the court circles at the expense of the Danes, and soon developed an insolence that aroused the general indignation of the people and ended in fierce strife and bitter hate, especially against the Germans.

Peder Andreas Heiberg.

Among those who joined in the national agitation was Peder Andreas Heiberg, whose satirical comedies and operettas became extremely popular. They were even compared to Holberg's plays; and though far inferior, many of them were of excellent quality, especially in delineation of character. In his dramatic and other works Heiberg attacked all existing institutions, his satires directed against nobility and against injustice of all kinds gaining for him the love and honor of the people. The government persecuted him inexorably, and when a new press law was passed, in 1799, he was sentenced to exile, passing the remainder of his life in France, where he received an appointment in the ministry of foreign affairs.

To encourage native talent, Holberg had offered prizes for meritorious poems, and others had followed his example. In 1759 the prize system had been further developed by the founding of a society "for the advancement of the sciences of the beautiful and the useful," offering rewards to young poets and proposing to guide the public taste. Unfortunately, however, the society consisted almost exclusively of persons who had little knowledge or appreciation of poetry, who accepted the standard of the age, and instead of genuine poems, were content with pretty ideas, expressed in smooth and metrical verses. The only competent member of the society was Klopstock, who had been called to Denmark in 1751 by Frederik V, and was supported by the Danish government for the remainder of his life, though the years between 1770 and his death, in 1803, were passed in Hamburg. While Klopstock exercised a powerful influence on dramatic and poetical taste in Denmark, it was not altogether for good, since many of his followers imitated the affected manner of the German poet, his high-sounding phrases and hollow pathos. An exception must be made in favor of his disciple Johannes Ewald, for the pupil soon surpassed his master and was entirely free from his failings.

Ewald.

Johannes Ewald was the son of a puritanic priest in Copenhagen, and in youth displayed all the wildness which belongs by tradition to the offspring of clergymen. At thirteen he ran away from his tutor, a pe-

dantic rector of Schlesvig, intending to take ship for Batavia, and hoping to be shipwrecked on some desert island; for he had just been reading *Robinson Crusoe*. Two years later, however, we find him a student of theology in Copenhagen, where he fell in love with a beautiful girl, Arense Hulegaard by name. But, if he continued his studies, at least a decade must elapse before Johannes would be in a position to marry, and he could not wait so long for his bride. The Seven Years' war had now broken out, and the youth resolved to seek fame and fortune as a soldier, slipping away from home and becoming a Prussian hussar. But instead of wealth and greatness, he found only hardship and privation, and after eighteen months of service returned to Copenhagen in shattered health, to find that Arense had married another. Ewald passed his theological examination; but, as he declared, he had abandoned all hope of earthly happiness, and in this frame of mind wrote his *Lykkens Tempel*, an allegorical prose narrative, which was published by the society after many revisions and corrections.

This was in 1764, and in the same year was offered a prize for an ode on the attributes of divinity. Ewald competed; but instead of an ode, produced a lyrical drama, entitled the *Adamiade*. It was sent back to him to be amended and improved, and when recast, says his biographer, "all had to confess that, since the days of King Skjold, his equal had not been seen." The next two years Ewald devoted to study, except that he won the prize offered for the best poem on the death of Frederik V with the most beautiful lyric that

had ever been composed in Denmark. Corneille and Klopstock were his favorite authors, and the influence of both appeared in his revised edition of the *Adamiade*, with the title changed to *Adam and Eve*, a biblical drama in five acts. His next tragedy, *Rolf Krage*, was from the story as told by Saxo, founded on a Danish legend. With many faults it contained also passages of remarkable beauty, and imparted the first impulse to a national movement in the field of dramatic art.

After a few satirical plays, Ewald wrote the tragedy of *Balder's Death*, again borrowing his materials from Saxo. It was remarkable for the beauty of its style and language, and as it was the first Scandinavian drama written in iambics, there was a ring in the verses such as had never before been heard in the Danish language. The tragedy was written in the little village of Rungsted, romantically situated on the Sound, and glorified in his beautiful poem, *The Bliss of Rungsted*. Thither he withdrew, abandoned by relatives and friends, and with the fates against him. His health was completely broken down; he was racked by excruciating pains; there were few who understood him, and his work was regarded as worthless from a monetary standpoint. Everyone turned away from him; it was even proposed, at one time, to send him to the poor-house; but he earned a scanty subsistence by writing short poems for marriages and other special occasions.

At length the government granted Ewald a pension, which enabled him to live in comparative ease at Copenhagen, where he did not want for friends and admirers.

Here, two years before his death, he published his last great work, *The Fisherman*, a dramatized picture of the life of the people on the coast, among whom he had dwelt so long. In this work, which, besides being his last, is also his best, are the songs *Liden Gunvor*, a popular ballad reproduced in masterly style, and *King Christian Stood by the Lofty Mast*, which became the favorite national song of the Danes, and of which we have an English translation by Longfellow. But the poet was now unable to wield a pen. He never complained; but his *Fisherman* had been written during an illness that was almost overpowering, and on the 17th of March, 1781, soon after its completion, he passed away, at the early age of thirty-seven.

Ewald was one of the greatest lyric poets of the North. Some of his songs belong, indeed, to the most beautiful productions of northern literature, and the heights of sublimity to which his greater poems attain have not often been reached. His language is pure, clear and dignified, and his verses show a rare mastery of form. Among his prose works was an excellent autobiography, which he did not live to complete, though it was published in Copenhagen in 1850-55.

French Influence.

After the death of Holberg, the theatre at Copenhagen fell upon evil times; for there were none who were able to supply the popular taste for good Danish plays. Chiefly through the example of the court, there was developed such a preference for French tragedies

and Italian operas that all else was thrown into the background, and audiences must be content with translations of such pieces as Voltaire's *Merope* and *Zaire*. An opera written as text to Italian music, in the high-flown style of the period, was received with such favor that the author, Nils Bredal, was appointed director of the theatre. Soon afterward a prominent critic wrote a bitter review of the opera, and when Bredal replied with a farce, the play-house was turned into a fighting arena between the friends of the director and those of the critic. This conflict was the occasion of Ewald's satirical drama, *The Brutal Applauders*. In the following season—that of 1772—Nordal Brun wrote, in the conventional French style, the tragedy of *Zarine*, which was received with boundless applause, as also was a later tragedy dealing with an episode from old Norwegian history. By reason of his grand and commanding individuality, Brun played an important part in the intellectual life of his time; but his fame rests rather on his hymns and patriotic songs than on his dramas.

Wessel.

Second only to Ewald among the poets of this period was Johan Herman Wessel, whose fearless attacks on the soulless imitations of the French put a check to them by making them ridiculous. A severe blow was dealt in his *Love Without Stockings*, a parody in the style of the pseudo-classical tragedies, written in Alexandrines, and with a scrupulous and intentionally ridiculous regard for the unities. The action consists chiefly

in the conflict between virtue and love; the whole play is a faithful copy of classic models, and seldom has a parody been so skillfully executed. Grete, who is in love with Johan von Ehrenpreis, a tailor-apprentice, has, in a dream, received warning that she will never be married unless the wedding takes place on that very day. But Johan cannot lead her to the altar on this day because he has no stockings. Grete, however, is intent on the wedding, and so her friend, Mette, suggests that Johan steal a pair of stockings from his rival, Mads. After a severe inward struggle between love and virtue, Johan becomes a thief. Grete has evil forebodings, but her lover refuses to countenance them, and everything promises well, when Mads and his friend Jesper discover the theft and charge Johan with it in the presence of his bride. Johan cannot outlive the disgrace and stabs himself; Grete follows his example; then Mads kills himself from grief at the loss of his beloved, and Jesper, likewise, takes his life. Finally Mette commits suicide, simply because she does not care to be the only survivor, and thus the ending of the play is sufficiently tragic.

The effect of the piece depends on the contrast between the ludicrous action of the most insignificant persons and the grand plot planned according to all the rules of art, together with the pretentious diction which struts about in high buskins, and at every moment forgets its assumed part, while the natural utterances of these persons, with their coarse phrases, obtrude themselves in the midst of their grandest speeches. The author has accomplished his task in a

most satisfactory manner, and while he never exaggerates, has filled his play to the brim with fun and humor.

The play did not, at first, produce the effect intended; for the public did not comprehend the significance of the satire. Its cheerful and vivid style did not fail to please, but people were perplexed with regard to the purpose of the drama, and did not know whether to laugh or cry, a fact which shows the overstrained character of the pieces then offered and listened to with the utmost gravity. Affectation and mannerism, with their sham pathos, still held the stage for a time longer; but Wessel gave the signal for its final banishment.

The Norwegian Society.

Wessel's name is inseparably connected with the so-called Norwegian Society, of which he was the most prominent member. Founded in 1772, this society was at first intended simply for bringing together the Norwegians who resided in Copenhagen, and who were beginning to feel dissatisfied with their Danish surroundings. It gradually assumed a literary character, undertaking to criticise literary productions and to publish prize essays and poems. Special homage was paid to the French school, while that of the Germans was violently opposed. The members ridiculed the imitators of Klopstock, nor did they spare Ewald, whose friends and admirers organized the Danish Literary Society and elected him an honorary member. The struggle between the two schools exercised a whole-

some influence on the masses by awakening in them an interest in the works of the day. The Norwegian Society especially rendered good service by the soundness of its criticism and the purity of its taste. In this circle Wessel spent most of his time, and outside of it was but little known. Constantly embarrassed by poverty and never fully appreciated, he sought refuge in the wine-cup and thus hastened his end; for he died at the age of forty-two.

Minor Dramatists.

The two dramatic idyls of Thomas Thaarup, *The Harvest Feast* and *Peter's Wedding*, were extremely popular on account of their simple, homely style and their sweet and sympathetic songs. Ole Johan Samsöc's northern tales and his historical drama of *Dyveke* are far above the average performances of the time; but death cut short a promising career. Of Christian Levin Sander's plays the best is the patriotic tragedy of *Niels Ebbesen*, which was received with favor. Charlotte Dorothea Biehl wrote a number of sentimental pieces of little value, but did excellent work in her translations of Cervantes, especially his *Don Quixote*. Among the most popular plays about the close of the eighteenth century were Falsen's *The Child Bringing Good Luck* and Olufsen's *The Golden Box*.

III.

Oehlenschläger and His Successors.

At the opening of the nineteenth century Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger, of whom mention has already been made in connection with the German drama, was the most prominent figure in Danish literature. Though a native of Copenhagen, his father belonged to a family whose members for many generations had been German organists and schoolmasters, and was himself strongly German in sentiment. His mother was the daughter of a citizen of Copenhagen, but was educated in Germany. In 1780, the year after Adam's birth, his father was appointed deputy superintendent of the palace of Frederiksborg, with free rooms for himself and family. Here the boy grew up in happy though modest circumstances, which could not fail to exert a favorable influence. As a rule, the palace was occupied only in the summer, and then it was filled with men in gorgeous uniforms and with pretty women, handsomely dressed. For the remainder of the year Adam, his sister and their playmates had at their exclusive disposal the entire palace, with its halls adorned with pictures, its park and gardens. The place was

quiet and isolated, and yet it was the source of a multitude of impressions that stamped themselves indelibly on the boy's imagination. He read everything that he could lay his hands on, folk-lore, tales, novels, plays, indiscriminately; yet, while his fancy was thus incessantly receiving nourishment from the most various sources, but very little was done to develop the other faculties of his mind until an accidental circumstance brought him to the notice of the poet Storm.

Edward Storm was inspector of a school, in which he procured the boy free tuition. When he left school it was decided that he should become a merchant, but before this was brought about, his long-cherished desire to devote himself to study ripened into maturity. Yet, for one reason or another, he did not make much progress in his studies. Instead of occupying himself with the ancient classics, he read novels and descriptions of travels, and instead of essays which he was required to write, he composed tales and dramas which he played with his friends. This suggested to him the thought of becoming an actor. His lively, imaginative nature had long been drawing him to the stage, and he believed that this was the right road by which to attain his object. Accordingly he made his *début*, but soon found himself mistaken and left the theatre to resume his studies. In this resolve he was strengthened by the brothers Persted, who, notwithstanding their youth, had already distinguished themselves by the publication of valuable scientific works, and with whom he was on friendly terms. In his twenty-first year he entered the Copenhagen university, where he first de-

voted himself very assiduously to the study of jurisprudence; but he soon turned again to more attractive occupations.

The naval engagement in the Copenhagen roadstead, April 2d, 1801, the gallantry of which made a deep impression on the people, also kindled Oehlenschläger's enthusiasm, and in a little drama which he wrote on this occasion we hear for the first time notes whose pure and deep harmony was full of promise in regard to the author's future success. He was also already writing extensively for literary journals.

Friendship with Steffens.

To Henrik Steffens, a native of Norway, but educated in Denmark, Oehlenschläger was chiefly indebted for making clear to him wherein his mission consisted. While studying in Germany, Steffens had become a disciple of the philosopher Schelling, and returned to Denmark as the avowed apostle of the new school; but he was not the man for the occasion, and he accomplished little, except in preparing the way for others. At Copenhagen he found Oehlenschläger writing a Norse tale and a volume of poems, both of which appeared to him as though written by an old man. After a long conversation, the latter became thoroughly imbued with German romanticism, and laying aside his tale and his verses, set himself to write a poem on the splendid and very ancient golden horns which had just been stolen from the royal cabinet of antiquities. In the most fascinating manner, with a ring and rhythm that

had never before been heard, he represented the horns as a choice gift of the gods, which they had taken back because man had failed to appreciate them as the precious relics of a venerable antiquity, and valued them only for the amount of gold they contained. The work was well received, and Steffens loudly proclaimed that a new and great poet had arisen in Denmark.

Literary Activity.

What Oehlenschläger now achieved is simply astonishing. In the course of a few months he completed a large volume of poems, most of which bear evidence of the intellectual change which had taken place in him. It contains, besides a great number of romantic pieces, the lyrical drama of *St. John's Eve*, one of the most remarkable of the author's works. The play is full of romantic passages, and at the same time a bold challenge, overflowing with the proud consciousness of certain victory, against the narrow views of poetry and of life on the part of the old school of letters. The volume made the greatest sensation, and many of the old school were enraged at Oehlenschläger, but he carried the whole of the younger generation with him. All resistance was useless; and with this single daring stroke the poet gained the foremost place in Danish national literature. In 1805 there appeared two new volumes, which, in addition to a number of poems and cycles of poems, also contain the deeply significant and symbolical *Vaulunders Saga*, and a play in which the legend of *Aladdin* has been dramatized by a mas-

ter's hand into one of the greatest masterpieces, not only in Scandinavian, but in European literature.

Travels and Tragedies.

In this year Oehlenschläger made a journey abroad. He first visited Steffens in Halle, and then travelled in Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland, everywhere visiting the representatives of literature—Goethe, Tieck, Madame de Staël and others. During this tour he also wrote, or finished, some of his most exquisite works. In Halle he completed *Hakon Jarl*, the finest of all his plays. In this tragedy the poet wished to extol Christianity as contrasted with heathenism, though the main interest attaches to the representative of the latter, who, in spite of his savage nature, is a grand character, drawn with great dramatic skill. His *Palnatoke* is the counterpart of *Hakon Jarl*, in so far as the former represents one of the noblest characters in heathen times, with the shady side of Catholicism as a background. Between these two tragedies he wrote *Balder hin Gode* in the antique style, with the compositions of Sophocles fresh in his mind.

From Northern antiques Oehlenschläger passed to the romantic Middle Age, borrowing from its ballad literature the materials for his tragedy *Axel og Valborg*. In Rome he wrote the tragedy of *Corregio* in the German language, as he was anxious to be recognized as a naturalized German author. Although his drama was played in several theatres, and was received with great applause, still he neither then nor later accomplished

his aim. The reason for this failure must, indeed, be partly sought in his marked Northern spirit and feeling, which found no intelligent response in Germany, but more in the fact that the whole pantheon of Northern gods and heroes from which Oehlenschläger borrowed his materials was at the time almost entirely unknown in Germany.

Though unsuccessful in Germany, Oehlenschläger secured all the greater recognition in his own country, and when he returned home in 1809, he was greeted as Denmark's greatest bard. All the works he had sent from abroad had produced an extraordinary sensation, both on account of their genuine poetic character and for the author's enthusiastic advocacy of the significance of Northern antiquities. The people began to grow conscious of their own national peculiarities, and the new era was in full progress.

Controversy with Baggesen.

During the first years after his return Oehlenschläger published a large number of works, many of which are of inferior quality; and now there broke out between him, or, rather between his adherents and Baggesen, a violent feud, that was destined to make a great stir in Danish literature. At first both the poets were on the best of terms, and when Baggesen left Denmark in 1800, never to return there again, as he believed, he bequeathed to his successor "his Danish lyre." But during his stay abroad Oehlenschläger had frequent occasion to be displeased with Baggesen, while the lat-

ter, as the senior poet and enjoying an established reputation in literature, would assume a patronizing attitude toward his competitor, whose superiority he was, however, secretly and reluctantly obliged to admit. When Oehlenschläger, on his return to Denmark, published a series of mediocre works, which were received with great enthusiasm and admiration by his friends, Baggesen seized the opportunity of submitting Oehlenschläger's tragedies to a very searching criticism, though it made at the time but little impression. Again, when his rival wrote hurriedly some very weak opera texts, for which Weyse and Kuhlau composed their beautiful music, Baggesen assumed in his critical reviews an attitude so hostile and reckless, and a spirit so ungenerous, that in spite of the sound judgment with which he defended the cause of correct taste, they failed to produce the desired effect, on account of the author's bitterness toward his more fortunate rival.

Oehlenschläger himself took little part in the controversy; but during the entire feud he continued to publish new works in rapid succession, some of them in his happiest mood, though more were written with haste and carelessness. Among the former were the cycle of romances, entitled *Helge* and several tragedies. These were followed by the beautiful dramatic idyll of *The Little Shepherd Boy*, which made so favorable an impression that Baggesen ceased his persecutions and soon afterward left the country, or rather was driven from it by the friends of his more popular rival.

The later works of Oehlenschläger include the great cycle of epic poems styled *The Gods of the North*, an-

other epic named *Rolf Krage*, and the tragedies of *Yrsa*, *Erik and Abel*, *Dina*, and *Dronning Margrete*. As a writer of comedies he does not rank very high. Such as came from his pen, and especially his *Freyjas Altar*, which he revised many times, show that, while he possessed the humor, he lacked the reflection which is indispensable in comedy intended to fulfill its main purpose, that of reflecting faithful pictures of life.

Like Baggesen, Oehlenschläger also had, as critics remarked, a strange illusion that he could be a German, as well as a Danish, poet. When he began his literary career, he deeply felt how much he owed to the great poets of Germany, and he also realized that the Germans were a people closely related to the Danes. He therefore made an attempt to belong to both, but his effort was unsuccessful, and when he approached the end of his life, he saw that he had not, as he had intended, directed the eyes of his countrymen to the South, but that he turned them to the North, and that he had awakened in the northern nations a vivid realization of their racial affinity, a fact obscured by centuries of discord. In the summer of 1829 Tegner crowned "the northern king of song" in the Lund cathedral. This was the recognition of the auspicious fact "that the time of discord was at an end." The long career of this "Adam of the skalds" closed in 1850.

Grundtvig.

In Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig we have a nature widely different from that of Oehlenschläger,

and yet one that exercised an important influence on the intellectual life of Denmark. He was as much devoted to the service of the church as to that of poetry, and the religious transformation which he underwent brought him into violent conflict with the spiritless and antiquated views of Christianity that were in vogue in his day. In his first sermon, delivered in 1810, he took for his text, "Why has the Word of God departed from his house?" By this discourse he provoked the hostility of the entire clergy of Copenhagen, and the result was sentence of expulsion. Yet, at fifty, he became a bishop, and never ceased in his warfare against infidelity and rationalism.

Grundtvig was a most prolific writer, producing more than a hundred volumes, besides a vast number of articles for various periodicals. No branch of literature was foreign to him, and he furnished valuable contributions to nearly all the more important fields touching the intellectual development of Denmark. Though a thorough student of Shakespeare and Schiller, he added nothing worthy of note to the stock of dramatic literature, probably deeming that the stage and the pulpit were not fitting associates. But the poetical element is everywhere conspicuous in his works, and it was said of him that he was a skald in the old-fashioned sense of the word, considering his art merely as a means to an end. He never wrote poetry for its own sake, merely giving utterance in song to the great thoughts that filled him. Most of his poems are marked by rare power and tenderness; so that the reader feels they have welled forth from a strong and profoundly poetical soul.

They teem with a wealth of original and striking pictures, and the verses are remarkable for their full-toned harmony, while the author possesses a remarkable faculty of discovering new and rich veins in the old and forgotten treasures of the language. His words come with power from the heart, and they touch the heart; but they rarely bear the impression of having passed through the purifying crucible of reflection.

Ingemann.

We have seen that Oehlenschläger, in a certain sense, belonged to the Romantic school. Grundtvig had nothing whatever to do with it, but there was another poet who was identified with Romanticism, and on whom Oehlenschläger's first works exercised a marked influence. This was Bernhard Severin Ingemann. His father was a preacher, and it was from him that Bernhard became imbued with the simple piety which characterizes all his poems. In his first collection, which among other things contains the Oriental legend *Parizade*, there is an elegiac, dreamy style, reminding one of Schiller, which, together with a graceful rhythm, pleased the public, and by his later works he continued to grow in popular favor. With the legendary poem, *The Black Knights*, in which in a symbolic and fantastic form he gives expression to an ultra-idealistic conception of the world, Ingemann closes the first epoch of his literary career, mainly as a lyric period. In the following years he wrote several dramas, in which the lyrical element is, however, still sufficiently prominent.

The most important one of these is the dramatized legend, *Reinald the Wonder Child*, but his *Masaniello* and *Blanca* won the greatest success.

In 1818 Ingemann entered on a long journey abroad, which was in many respects favorable to his development, especially in arousing him out of that ethereal frame of mind in which, up to this time, he had written his works. While preparing *The Traveller's Lyre*, a collection of poems which still contain traces of his former style, he had begun editing a long series of legends and tales, of which the first volume appeared in 1819, and this was followed by several others. Though Ingemann was not yet completely emancipated from Romanticism, we find in this work more naturalness and freshness, and a more objective treatment. In his choice of subjects he also manifested a desire of gaining a more solid basis, first in his comedy, *Magnetismen i Barberstuen*, and more so in his *Kampen for Valhal*, in which the plot is taken from the ancient history of the North. But none of these efforts were very successful. His taste for the mystic and fantastic being closely allied to his Romanticism, he was naturally drawn to the middle ages, and even in his second epoch as a writer we find him borrowing the materials for his poem, *The Deserted Castle*, from the times of Valdemar the Great.

From 1822, in which year he became Lector at the Sorøe academy, began that period of his poetical career in which he completed his best works, and those which are of most importance to the literature of Denmark. First appeared the poem, *Valdemar den Store*; then fol-

lowed four historical novels, and the cycle was closed with the poem *Dronning Margrete*. In these works, based on the popular ballads of the middle ages, Ingemann took Sir Walter Scott as his model, and though his novels are by no means equal to those of the renowned Scottish author, and are in many ways incorrect in personal characterization and historical coloring, still they are exceedingly attractive on account of their vivid and graphic descriptions of the most glorious epoch of Danish history. They had a very stimulating influence on the Danish people, and by them, more than by any other of his works, Ingemann came to be regarded as a national poet. The cycle of romances, *Holger Danske*, is also closely allied to these historical novels, and is one of his most original and attractive works.

In later times Ingemann wrote several tales in which the plots are taken from real life. The best among them is the admirably written story, *The Children of the Village*, the materials for which were gathered in 1852. Some of Ingemann's dramatic works also date from this time, and with them he produced not a few lyric poems in his very best style. This is particularly true of his religious songs, which are distinguished for their sweetness, melody and love of nature. During the last years of his life he was deeply engrossed in religious speculations, the result of which he embodied in poetical compositions, such as *Letters Containing the Thoughts of One Departed*. He died in 1862 at Sorøe, where he had worked faithfully for forty years.

IV.

Hans Christian Andersen.

Like many other writers who have mistaken their calling, Hans Christian Andersen believed that nature intended him for a dramatist, and always repudiated the title which the world gave to him as the children's poet and story-teller. Very indignant was the letter which he wrote to a friend, when it was proposed to raise to him a statue in Copenhagen, in which he was represented as surrounded by listening children. "None of the sculptors," he said, "have known me; none of their sketches indicate that they have seen what is characteristic in me. It is the fashion to call me 'the children's poet.' My aim has been to be the poet of all ages; children could not represent me." Though Andersen was not a dramatist in the proper sense of the word, his stories have served as the basis for many dramatic pieces in the lighter branches of the art.

Character of Works.

Hans Christian Andersen was a unique figure in Danish literature, and a solitary phenomenon in the

literature of the world. By the alchemy of genius he converted the common, neglected nonsense of the nursery into rare poetic treasure. Boots, who kills the ogre and marries the princess—the typical lover in fiction from the remotest Aryan antiquity down to the present time—appears in Andersen in a hundred disguises, not with the rudimentary features of the old story, but modernized, individualized, and carrying on his shield an unobtrusive moral. In *Jack the Dullard* he comes nearest to his primitive prototype, and no visible effort is made to refine him. In *The Most Extraordinary Thing* he is the vehicle of a piece of social satire, and narrowly escapes the lot which the fates seem especially to have prepared for inventors, that is, to make the fortune of some unscrupulous clown, while they themselves die in poverty. In *The Porter's Son* he is an aspiring artist, full of the fire of genius, and he wins his princess by conquering that many-headed ogre with which every self-made man has to battle—the world's envy, and malice and contempt for a lowly origin. It would be easy to multiply examples but these may suffice.

Moral Purpose.

In another species of fairy tale, which Andersen may be said to have invented, incident seems to be secondary to the moral purpose, which is yet so artfully hidden that it requires a certain maturity of intellect to detect it. In this field Andersen has done his noblest work and in this he has earned his immortality. Who can read,

for instance, that marvellous little story, *The Ugly Duckling*, without perceiving that it is a subtle and most exquisite revenge the poet is taking upon the humdrum Philistine world, which despised and humiliated him before he lifted his wings and flew away with the swans, who knew him as their brother? Likewise in *The Goloshes of Fortune* there is a wealth of amusing adventure, all within the reach of a child's comprehension, and which more than suffices to fascinate the reader who fails to penetrate beneath the surface. The delightful satire, which is especially applicable to Danish society, is undoubtedly lost to nine out of ten of the author's foreign readers, but so prodigal is he, both of humorous and pathetic meaning, that every one is charmed with what he finds, without suspecting how much he has missed. *The Little Mermaid* belongs to the same order of stories, though the pathos here predominates, and the resemblance to Fouqué's *Undine* is rather too striking. But perhaps the gem of the whole collection is *The Emperor's New Clothes*, which, in subtlety of intention and universality of application, rises above age and nationality. Respect for the world's opinion and the tyranny of fashion have never been satirized with more exquisite humor than in the figure of the emperor walking the streets of his capital in his night robe, followed by his ecstatic courtiers.

Style.

It was not only in the choice of his theme that Andersen was original. He also created a style, though he

borrowed much of it from the nursery. "It was perfectly wonderful," "You would scarcely have believed it," "One would have supposed that there was something the matter in the poultry-yard, but there was nothing at all the matter"—such beginnings are not what we expect to find in dignified literature. No one but Andersen has ever dared to employ them. As Doctor Brandes has said in his essay on Andersen, no one has ever attempted, before him, to transfer the vivid mimicry and gesticulation which accompany a nursery tale to the printed page. If you tell a child about a horse, you don't say that it neighed, but you imitate the sound; and the child's laughter or fascinated attention compensates you for your loss of dignity. The more successfully you crow, roar, grunt, and mew, the more vividly you call up the image and demeanor of the animal you wish to represent, and the more impressed is your juvenile audience. Now, Andersen does all these things in print, a truly wonderful feat. Every variation in the pitch of the voice—we might almost say every change of expression in the storyteller's face—is contained in the text. He does not write his story, he tells it; and all the children of the whole wide world sit about him and listen with eager, wide-eyed wonder to his marvellous improvisations.

In reading Andersen's collected works one is particularly impressed with the fact that what he did outside of his chosen field is of an inferior quality—inferior as judged by his own high standard, though in itself often valuable and interesting. *The Improvisatore*, upon which, next to the *Wonder-tales*, his fame

chiefly rests, is a kind of disguised autobiography, which exhibits the author's morbid sensibility and what may be called the feminine character of his mind. To appeal to the reader's pity in your hero's behalf is a daring experiment, and it cannot, except in brief scenes, be successful. A prolonged strain of compassion soon becomes wearisome, and not the worthiest object in the world can keep one's charity interested through four hundred pages. Antonio, in the *Improvvisatore*, is a milksop whom the author, with a lavish expenditure of sympathy, parades as a hero. He is positively ludicrous in his pitiful softness, vanity, and humility. That the book nevertheless remains unfailingly popular is chiefly due to the poetic intensity with which the author absorbed and portrayed every Roman sight and sound. Italy throbs and glows in the pages of the *Improvvisatore*—the old vagabond Italy of pre-Garibaldian days, when priests and bandits and pretty women divided the power of Church and State.

The same feminine sentimentality which, in spite of its picturesqueness, makes the *Improvvisatore* unpalatable to many readers, is still more glaringly exhibited in *O. T.* and the *Two Baronesses*. In *The Story of My Life* this quality again asserts itself on every page in the most unpleasant manner. The author makes no effort to excite the reader's imagination, but he makes constant appeals to his sympathy. Nevertheless this autobiography rivals in historic and poetic worth Rousseau's *Confessions* and Benvenuto Cellini's *Life*. The absolute candor with which Andersen lays bare his soul, the complete intentional or un-

intentional self-revelation, gives a psychological value to the book which no mere literary graces could bestow.

The Fairy Tale of My Life.

Andersen conceived of his life as a fairy tale, and delighted in living up to his own ideal of living. The very title of his autobiography in Danish—*Mit Livs Eventyr*—shows this conclusively; and it ought to have been rendered in English *The Fairy Tale of My Life*.

The feeling of the marvelous pervades the book from beginning to end. The prose facts of life had but a remote and indistinct existence to the poet, and he blundered along miserably in his youth, supported and upheld by a dim but unquenchable aspiration. He commiserated himself, and yet felt that there was something great in store for him because of his exceptional endowments. Every incident in his career he treated as if it were a miracle, which required the suspension of the laws of the universe for its performance. God was a benevolent old man, with a long beard—just as depicted in Luther's Catechism—who sat up in the skies and spent his time chiefly in managing the affairs of Hans Christian Andersen as pleasantly as possible; and Hans Christian was duly grateful, and cried out on every third or fourth page at the thought of the goodness of God or man. Sometimes, for a change, he cried out at the wickedness of the latter, and marvelled, with the naïveté of a spoiled child, that there should be such wicked people in the world, who should persist in misunderstanding and misrepresenting him. His

world was the child's world, in which there is but one grand division into good and bad, and the innumerable host that occupy the middle-ground between them are ignored. Those who praised what he wrote were good people; those who ridiculed him were a malignant and black-hearted lot, whom he was very sorry for and would include in his prayers, in the hope that God would make them better.

With all of us there was a time when we also were addicted to a similar classification, and this is a sign of immaturity of intellect; in Andersen's case it is one of the many indications that, intellectually, he never outgrew his childhood. He never possessed the power of judgment that we expect in a grown-up man. His opinions on social and political questions were entirely worthless. And yet he was, in spite of all these limitations—nay, even in consequence of them—a poet of rare power. The vitality which, in other authors goes toward intellectual development, produced in him strength and intensity of imagination. Everything which his fancy touched it invested with life and beauty. It divined the secret soul of bird, and beast and inanimate things. His hens and ducks and donkeys speak as hens and ducks and donkeys would speak if they had the gift of speech. Their temperaments and characters are scrupulously respected. Even shirt-collars, darning-needles, flowers and sunbeams, he endowed with physiognomies and speech, fairly consistent with their ruling characteristics. This personification, especially of inanimate objects, may at first appear arbitrary; but it is a part of the consistency of Ander-

sen's genius that it never stoops to mere amusing and fantastic trickery. The character of the darning-needle is the character which a child would naturally attribute to a darning-needle, and the whole multitude of vivid personifications which fills his tales is governed by the same consistent, but dimly apprehended instinct. Of course, it is not asserted that he was conscious of any such consistency; creative processes rarely are conscious. But he needed no reflection in order to discover the child's view of its own world. He never ceased to regard the world from the child's point of view, and his personification of an old clothes-press or a darning-needle was therefore as natural as that of a child who beats the chair against which it bumped its head.

In works of more ambitious scope, where this code of conduct would be out of place, Andersen was never wholly at ease. As lovers, his heroes usually cut a sorry figure; their milk-and-water passion is described, but it is never felt. They make themselves ridiculous by their innocence, and are amusing when they least suspect it. Likewise, in his autobiography, he is continually exposing himself to ridicule by his naïve candor, and his inability to adapt himself to the etiquette which prevails among grown-up people. For many years to come, the fair creatures of his fancy will continue to brighten the childhood of new generations. It is in this happy, passionless realm that Andersen dwells, and here he reigns supreme. No rival has ever entered this sphere, and even critics are excluded. Nevertheless, Andersen need have no fear of the latter;

for even if they had the wish, they would not have the power to rob him of his laurels.

Career.

But enough of comment; let us now turn to the story of his life. Hans Christian Andersen was born in the little town of Odense, on the island of Fünen, April 2, 1805. His father was a poor shoemaker with some erratic ambitions; or, if his son's word may be trusted, a man of richly gifted and truly poetic mind. His wife was a few years older and much more ignorant than himself; and, when they began housekeeping together, in a little back room, they rejoiced in being able to nail together a bridal bed out of the scaffolding which had recently supported a dead nobleman's coffin. The black mourning drapery which yet clung to the wood gave them quite a sense of magnificence. Their first child, Hans Christian, grew up amid these mean surroundings, constantly worried by the street boys, who made a butt of him, and tortured him in a thousand ingenious ways known to their species. He had practically no early education; but, for all that, was haunted with dreams foreshadowing his future greatness. Guided by this premonition, he started, at the age of fourteen, for Copenhagen, a tall, ill-favored, and ungainly lad, but resolved, somehow or other, to conquer fame and honor. He tried his fortune as a dancer, singer, actor, and failed lamentably in all his efforts. He could not himself estimate the extent of his own ignorance, nor could he dream what a figure he was

cutting. Undismayed by rebuffs, though suffering agony from his wounded vanity, he wrote poems, comedies and tragedies, in which he plagiarized, more or less unconsciously, from the elder Danish poets. Finally, Jonas Collins, one of the directors of the Royal theatre, became interested in the youth, whose unusual ambition meant either madness or genius. He induced King Frederick VI to pay for his education, and after half a dozen years at school Hans Christian passed the entrance examination at the university. His patron continued to assist him, and his hospitable house in Bredgade became a second home to Andersen. There he met, for the first time, people of refinement and culture on equal terms, and his morbid self-introspection was, in a measure, cured by kindly association, tempered by wholesome fun and friendly criticism. He now resolved to abandon his university studies and devote his life to literature.

Early Works.

Strange to say, in his first book, *A Pedestrian Tour*, published at the age of twenty-four, he assumed by turns the blasé mask of Heine and the fantastically eccentric mask of Hoffmann, both of which ill became his good-natured, plebeian, Danish countenance. For all that, the book was a success; and no less an authority than the æsthetic grand mogul, Heiberg, hailed it as a work of no common merit. It strikes us to-day as an exhibition of that mocking smartness of youth which often hides a childish heart. His vaudeville, *Love*

on the *Nicholas Tower*, which satirizes the drama of chivalry, is in the same vein, and also made a hit. A volume of poems was likewise well received; but soon afterward he met with his first literary reverse. A second collection of verses, entitled *Phantasies and Sketches*, was pitilessly ridiculed by Henrik Hertz, in his *Letters from the Dead*, and Andersen's lack of style and violations of syntax were rather maliciously commented upon. If Gabriel's trumpet had sounded, it could not have startled Andersen more; he was in despair; and, like the great child he was, went about craving sympathy, and weeping when he failed to find it.

Travels.

In 1831 Andersen made his first trip abroad. "By industry and frugality," he says, "I had saved up a little sum of money, so I resolved to spend a couple of weeks in Northern Germany." The result of this journey was *Shadow Pictures*, which was followed by *Vignettes on Danish Poets*, and a chaplet of verse entitled *The Twelve Months of the Year*. It is quite true, as he affirms, that in his *Vignettes* "he only spoke of that which was good in these poets;" but in consequence there is a great lack of Attic salt in the book.

In 1833 he again went abroad, visited Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy, and sent home the dramatic poem *Agnete and the Merman*, the comparative failure of which was a great grief to him. After his return from Rome, in 1835, he published his *Improvisatore*, which slowly won its way. It was the

reputation which this novel gained abroad that changed public opinion in Denmark in its favor. A second novel, *Only a Fiddler*, is a fresh variation of his autobiography, and the lachrymose and chaotic story, *O. T.*—the brand of the Odense penitentiary—deserved no better reception than was accorded to it.

Tales for Children.

It is singular that misconception and adversity never hardened Andersen or toughened the fibre of his personality. The same lamentable lack of robustness—not to say manliness—which marked his youth, remained his prevailing characteristic until the end of his life. It is, however, probable that, if he had ever reached intellectual maturity, both himself and the world would have been losers. It is his unique distinction to have expressed a simplicity of soul which is usually dumb—which has, at all events, nowhere else recorded itself in literature. We all have a dim recollection of how the world looked from the nursery window; but no book has preserved so vivid and accurate a negative of that marvellous panorama as Andersen's *Wonder Tales for Children*, the first collection of which appeared in 1835. All the jumbled, distorted proportions of things—like the reflection of a landscape in a crystal ball—are capitally reproduced. The fantastically personifying fancy of childhood, where does it have more delightful play? The radiance of an enchanted fairy realm that bursts like an iridescent soap-bubble at the touch of the finger of reason, where does

it linger in more alluring beauty than in *The Sandman*, *The Little Mermaid*, or *The Ice-Maiden*? There is a bloom, an undefinable, dewy freshness about the grass, the flowers, the very light, and the children's sweet faces.

Wonder Tales.

Throughout the first series of *Wonder Tales* there is an air of make-believe, which imposes upon us delightfully, and makes us accept the most incredible doings, as we accept them in a dream, as the most natural thing in the world. In the later series, where the didactic tale becomes more frequent, as in *The Pine Tree*, *The Wind's Tale*, *The Buckwheat*, there is an occasional forced note. The story-teller becomes a benevolent, moralizing uncle, who takes the child upon his knee in order to instruct while entertaining it. But he is no more in the game. A cloying sweetness of tone, such as sentimental people often adopt toward children, spoils more than one of the fables; and when occasionally he ventures upon a love story, as in *The Rose-Elf*, *The Old Bachelor's Nightcap*, *The Porter's Son*, he is apt to be as unintentionally amusing as he is in telling his own love episode in *The Fairy Tale of My Life*. We all feel that there is something incongruous in a child's talking of love.

Plays.

But, as we have seen, his world-wide fame as the poet of childhood never satisfied Andersen. He never

accepted it without a protest. It neither pleased nor sufficed him. He was especially eager to win laurels as a dramatist, and in 1839 won his first dramatic success by a farcical vaudeville, entitled *The Invisible at Sprogøe*. Then followed the romantic drama, *The Mulatto*, which charmed the public and disgusted the critics, and *The Moorish Maiden*, which disgusted both. These plays are slipshod in construction, but emotionally effective. The characters are loose-fibred and vague, and have no more backbone than the author himself. Johan Ludvig Heiberg thought it time to chastise the half-cultured shoemaker's son for his audacity, and in the third act of *A Soul After Death*, held him up to ridicule. Andersen, stabbed again to the heart, hastened away from home, "suffering and disconcerted," as he declares. But before leaving, he published *A Picture-Book Without Pictures*, which is attached to the American edition of his *Stories and Tales*, and deserves its place. The moon's pathetic and humorous observations on the world she looks down upon every evening of her circuit have already become classic in half a dozen languages. The little girl, who came to kiss the hen and to beg her pardon; the ragged street gamin, who died upon the throne of France; the Hindoo maid, who burned her lamp upon the bank of the Ganges in order to see if her lover was alive; the little girl, who was penitent because she laughed at the lame duckling with a red rag around its leg—the whole inimitable gallery is known from beginning to end. The tenderest, the softest, the most virginal spirit breathes through all these sketches.

They are sentimental, no doubt, and a trifle too sweet; but they belong to a period of our lives when a little excess in that direction does not displease us.

In 1842 Andersen gave to the world *A Poet's Bazaar*, a chronicle of his travels through nearly all the countries of Europe. Two years later came the drama of *The King is Dreaming*, and in the following year, the fairy comedy *The Flower of Fortune*. But his highest dramatic triumph was the anonymous comedy *The New Lying-in Room*, which, in a measure, proved his contention that it was personal hostility and not critical scruples that made so large a portion of the Copenhagen literati persecute him. For the very men who would have been the first to hold his play up to scorn were the heartiest in their applause, as long as they did not know that Andersen was its author. Less pronounced was the success of the lyrical drama *Little Kirsten*, and the somewhat ambitious epic *Ahasverus*, came very near being a failure. The next ventures of this versatile writer were the novels *The Two Baronesses*, and the fairy comedies, *More than Pearls and Gold*, adapted from a German original; *The Sandman*, and *The Elder Tree Mother* (1851). Three other comedies, *He was not Born*, *On Langebro*, and *When the Spaniards were Here*, complete the cycle of his dramatic productions.

Last Days.

Though Andersen never attained in Copenhagen an uncontested recognition of his talent, honors, both from home and abroad, were showered upon him. But in

spite of obloquy and ridicule at home, Andersen continued his triumphant progress through all the lands of the civilized world. In 1875 his tale, *The Story of a Mother*, was published simultaneously in fifteen languages, in honor of his seventieth birthday. A few months later, he died at the villa Rolighed, near Copenhagen. His life was indeed as marvellous as any of his tales. A gleam of light from the wonderland in which he dwelt seems to have fallen upon his cradle and to have illuminated his whole career. It was certainly in this illumination that he himself saw it, as appears in the opening sentence of autobiography: "My life is a lovely fairy tale, happy and full of incidents."

The softness, the sweetness, the juvenile innocence of Danish Romanticism found their happiest expression in him; on the other hand are his superficiality, the lack of steel in his will, his vagueness and irresponsibility. If he did not invent a new literary form, he enriched and dignified an old one, and revealed in it a world of unsuspected beauty. He was great in little things, and little in great things. He had a heart of gold, a silver tongue, and the spine of a mollusk. Like a flaw in a diamond, a curious plebeian streak cut straight across his nature. With all his virtues he lacked that higher self-esteem which we call nobility.

V.

Recent Danish Drama.

Johan Ludvig Heiberg, a son of Peder Andreas Heiberg, though he must be characterized as a Romanticist, and was on his first appearance strongly influenced by Oehlenschläger, is still in many respects a sharp contrast to the poets and dramatists already described. While the latter abandoned themselves freely to their poetical inspirations, without criticising their own works, Heiberg was in the highest sense reflective, and he severely criticised all his own productions. In 1814 he published his first great work, *Marionetttheatret*, which contained two Romantic dramas, *Don Juan* and *Potter Walter*, their refined and noble diction attracting wide attention. Three years later appeared *Boldly Ventured is Half the Victory*, a study from Calderon, of whom Heiberg was a great admirer, choosing him as the subject of his thesis for the degree of doctor. In the same year he published a Romantic work on the Psyche myth. His critical bent had already shown itself in a dramatic satire, in which he rebuked in a most scathing manner the vagaries of the Romantic school, especially Ingemann's idealistic dramas and the

public who were wild with enthusiasm over them. This led to a feud between himself and Grundtvig, who assumed the defense of Ingemann, but was completely vanquished by Heiberg's reply.

Heiberg's Vaudeville.

After a few years' residence in Kiel, where he was appointed lector of Danish language and literature, Heiberg published in Copenhagen a number of vaudevilles which made a great stir in æsthetical circles. The peculiarity of this kind of play, as introduced on the Danish stage, consists in the manner in which the words and music are blended into one, but still so that the music is the subordinate element, serving chiefly to give a lyric character to the drama. The models of these light and lively little pieces were really taken from the French stage, but in Heiberg's hands the vaudeville was essentially changed, and became an entirely new dramatic species, which he well knew how to use as a means for arousing that taste for the local comic element which is peculiar to the Danish people. The vaudevilles were received with storms of applause on account of the genuine humor in the dialogue and in the couplets, the charming melodies admirably adapted to the words, and the really comical characters that occur in the plays. The enthusiasm came, however, only from the public at large; for critics directed persistent and violent attacks against the new style of drama.

Of Heiberg's greater plays, *Elverhøi* is the most re-

markable. Here, as well as in *Syvsoverdag*, the style of the popular ballad has been applied in a masterly manner for the purpose of increasing the romantic coloring. In the comedy of *Alferne*, Tieck's fairy tale *Die Elfin* has been dramatized with great art and skill. The Aristophanic comedy, *A Soul after Death*, is a strikingly humorous satire on narrow-mindedness, with bold indirect sallies against various prominent individuals and the prevailing tendencies in the literature of the period. In addition to many novels and lyric poems, he also wrote the charming cycle of romances called *De Nygifte*.

Of all Heiberg's poetical compositions his vaudevilles have had the most influence on the development of Danish literature, and by them he gained his aim, which was to awaken the people to a taste for local comedy; thus he created the conditions by which modern comedy flourished in Denmark. In his various relations to the theatre, as dramatist, manager and censor, Heiberg exercised an important influence on its development.

Hertz.

Though Heiberg was not the centre of a school, a number of poets grouped themselves around him, chief among whom was Henrik Hertz, the founder of the new comedy in Denmark. The first important work from his pen was *Amors Genistreger*, a charming comedy in verse, a kind of poetical composition hovering between the pathetic and the work-a-day element. This afforded an excellent arena for sportive grace, and

was the field in which Hertz, by the very bent of his genius, felt himself most at home. At the same time he published his celebrated *Ghost's Letters, or Epistles from Paradise*, a series of rhymed epistles in which he has taken Baggesen as his model in respect to form; but the work is written with such skill and excellence that the disciple may be said to have surpassed his master.

In subsequent poetical works, Hertz made a practical application of the æsthetic theories which he had laid down in his rhymed epistles. But the drama was his specialty, and he produced much that was of excellence in every branch of theatrical composition. Following in the wake of Heiberg, he wrote admirable vaudevilles, such as *The Debate in the Police Friend*—a local paper—and *A Park for the Poor*. He also wrote comedies, for which the plot was taken from life, such as *The Savings Bank*, *The Visit to Copenhagen*; plays in which the plots were borrowed from various countries and various ages; and finally he produced romantic plays. In most of his pieces, with the exception, perhaps, of his vaudevilles, which, on the whole, are inferior to Heiberg's, Hertz evinces perfect command of the technical methods of the drama and a never-failing vein of humor which produces a most excellent effect, especially in those of his works that deal with national subjects.

Paludan Müller.

Among the fellow-students of Hans Christian Andersen, at the University of Copenhagen, was Frederik Paludan-Müller, whose poetical works are so rich in

thought and have such intrinsic value that he must be regarded as one of the most prominent of Danish poets. The first works that he published, his poetic and patriotic romances, and his witty and graceful play, *Love at the Court*, awakened great expectation, and this was further increased by his two poems, *Danserinden* and *Love and Psyche*.

Adam Homo.

The satirical tendency of Paludan-Müller's muse, directed against his own time, reached its climax in the dramatic poem of *Adam Homo*, in which the half-derisive, half-plaintive satire of his early performances developed into biting irony. The poet has seen the world in the meantime, and has learned to know humanity. What he has seen has filled his soul with disgust and resentment, and in this mood he created his great poem, which is one of the most remarkable that any literature can boast. The author looks upon the sea of humanity about him, and from the multitude he selects an individual, a very ordinary mortal, and then shows how his hero, whose intellectual powers are of no mean order, and who might have become something good and useful, from mere human weakness permits the intellectual capital with which Heaven has endowed him to be squandered, and the hero ends as a miserable snob; but this does not prevent him from attaining a high social position in the world. As a contrast to this individual, whose career is sketched from the cradle to the grave, the poet has introduced a female character of the highest purity and intellectual beauty, refined

and charming, but no less human and frail than the hero himself.

Kalænus.

The poet again employs the religious-ethical element in some of the best of his later works, as *Abel's Death*, *Paradiset*, *Ahasverus*, and *Kalænus*. The last of these is profoundly conceived and executed in brilliant style. The author here represents the Greek intellectual life with its exclusive love of beauty, and contrasts it with the speculative Hindoo mysticism, with its hazy, yet far more ambitious, ideals, and then he impersonates these essentially different views of life, the Greek by the world-conquering Alexander, and the Indian by the sage Kalænus, who is solely in quest of God. The latter enthusiastically greets the young hero as the divinity whom he has so long been expecting, but by degrees he sees that he has been taking appearances for the reality, and he expiates his error by immolating himself on an altar to the God whom he has offended. With matchless art and skill the writer has succeeded in drawing truthful and striking pictures from both the worlds which have come into conflict, and, as each of the principal figures is right from his own standpoint, the effect is naturally tragical. A halo of beauty is thrown around the heroic figure of Alexander and around the life of which it is the centre.

Of Paludan-Müller's compositions that deal with ancient mythology, the best, in addition to his *Love and Psyche*, are *Venus*, *Tithon*, and *The Wedding of the Dryad*. All his works in this field are clothed in the

dramatic form; the only exception being the small lyric *Adonis*, which was written a short time before his death. Though his dramatic works are not equal in depth and solidity to his other productions, they are still very attractive on account of their refined and pregnant diction, and the sublime lyric vein pervading them.

Ploug.

In Parmo Karl Ploug we meet with a very characteristic combination of the poet and the new practical ideas which had such great influence on the younger generation. From his youth he was a strenuous advocate of Scandinavianism and of liberal progressive sentiments, and for these he fought both in his songs and in the paper which he edited. He began his literary career as a writer of songs for the students, for whom he wrote a number of witty and graceful poems. They were originally intended simply for the narrow circle of his comrades, but on account of their peculiar power and freshness they soon found their way to the people. In several dramatic works, overflowing with humor, he poured forth a most telling satire on the political and literary conditions of his time. It was not long before he became the bard of the whole people, and for many years his voice was heard on every national event.

Hostrup.

Jen Christian Hostrup, like Ploug, proceeded from the circle of university students for whom he wrote

songs brimful of youthful buoyancy. Presently he also wrote comedies, operettas, which at first were played with great success at the Student's Union, but also reached the public at large, and by his comedy *Gjenboerne* he at once became the favorite of all classes. This piece was soon followed by a series of vaudevilles and operas, all brimful of bright harmless fun, while some of them do not lack a serious background. In the text are inserted excellent songs sung to most charming airs, so that his plays are among the most amusing and popular on the Danish stage. In addition to his dramatic works, Hostrup has written a number of beautiful songs and graceful lyrics, among which his patriotic hymns are marked by a rare sublimity of style. In 1855 he became a preacher, and after that time was seldom heard from, but always with the same freshness of thought and form, and the same genial warmth of feeling and sentiment as in his earlier productions.

A Danish Authoress.

The most prominent female writer in the first half of the nineteenth century was Thomasine Christine Gyllembourg-Ehrensvärd, who, while still very young, married Peder Andreas Heiberg, and became the mother of Johan Ludvig. After her husband's banishment, she made an alliance with the Swedish baron, whose name she bore, himself an exile from Sweden through taking part in the conspiracy against Gustav III. Though a woman of remarkable culture and possessed of rare poetic talent, she did not make her liter-

ary début until she was fifty-three years of age. This was done in the novel, *Familien Polonius*, which anonymously and half in sport she allowed to appear in a journal edited by her son. The work met with such success that the authoress was encouraged to continue, writing a series of romances whose subjects were taken from every-day life. In a long career, rich in personal experiences, she had enjoyed exceptional opportunities to observe the doings of all classes of society; her culture, her amiability, and her broad humanity give a further charm to her descriptions. Several times she put her stories in dramatic dress; but they were never popular.

Overskou.

The plays of Thomas Overskou have something in common with those of Heiberg and Hertz; for, though by no means equal to them in merit, they are based on the dramatic foundations established by these more famous authors. But more valuable than any of Overskou's pieces is his elaborate work on the Danish theatre, with its history from the earliest traces of the Danish drama down to times in which he lived. Of Caspar Johan Boye, the best known plays are *Juta* and *William Shakespeare*; but he is better known as the author of some beautiful songs, both sacred and secular. The dramatic works of Just Mathias Thiele are held in slight esteem; but he was the author of a valuable life of Thorwaldsen and edited some choice collections of Danish popular legends. Paul Chievitz wrote novels and dramas in which there is a strong vein of comedy,

though many of them are somewhat crude in form, and otherwise below the usually accepted standards.

The Period of Decadence.

About the middle of the nineteenth century the number of poets and dramatists began to decrease; for the spirit of the age was more practical, and the struggle for independence absorbed all other interests. Thus, for a decade or two, little of real merit was given to the stage. Among the few productions that are worthy of note is the lyrical drama of *Drot og Marsk*, by Christian Richardt, in which are shown talents of the highest order. He is also the author of a number of excellent lyrics, which, while showing much depth of feeling, are often original and always elegant in form. When, however, he forsakes the lyrical vein, as in his fairy tale, *Tornerose*, and his biblical poem of *Judith*, he assumes a task beyond his strength. Another lyric drama of merit is the *Fulvia* of Hans Wilhelm Kaalund, describing in a series of graphic scenes the struggle between early Christianity and the heathen faith. Both plays are widely read, but seldom acted; for the stage does not favor the lyric muse. Erik Bögh excelled in localizing foreign vaudevilles, which came from his hands in an entirely new and local dress. He also wrote original works, including one of the best comedies produced on the modern Danish stage. Christian Knud Frederik Mølbech produced in his *Ambrosius* a drama which is remarkable for the excellence of its character drawing and for the beauty of its

poetic style. He is also the author of a faithful and elegant version of Dante's *Divina Comedia*, which, together with the translations of Shakespeare by Foer-son, of Euripides and Homer by Wilster, and of Byron and Shakespeare by Lembcke, is the best that has been accomplished in rendering the foreign classics into Danish.

Realism.

The realistic element, though not entirely lacking in the Danish literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, is not conspicuous during that period. Paludan-Müller and a few others, it is true, drew very freely on real life, which they possessed the faculty of describing vividly and faithfully; but behind these pictures of reality there is always an ideal conception of life, and the former are used only for the purpose of satire, or to pave the way for the ideal. By the middle of the century, however, or perhaps a little before that date, idealism reached its climax, and gradually decreased until it had barely a handful of representatives. A period of stagnation followed the disappearance of the Romanticists. The Schleswig-Holstein war of 1866 and the attendant hostility to Germany put a stop to intellectual intercourse between two countries which before had been in the closest intimacy. For a time no new ties were formed, and dullness settled upon the little island kingdom.

With the exception of a few writers who conquered for themselves a place in literature and continued their activity, and especially the young poet, Ernst von der

Recke, who, in a series of dramatic works, showed eminent dramatic talents, all the rest that was produced in this latter period was extremely weak and sapless. In recent times the æsthetic literature has again been awakened to a new life, but its productions have an essentially different character from the idealism of the preceding period, being very intimately connected with that powerful realistic tide, which, during the last decades, has almost flooded the general literature of the civilized world. It endeavors, in a much lighter degree than ever before, to approach reality and describe it, either for its own sake or with a view of preparing the way to tendencies and views which are diametrically opposed to the old, idealistic views of life. The movement came to Denmark as a result of the social and religious agitation with which it is everywhere intimately connected.

H. F. Ewald.

Among those who still adhered to idealism was the direfully conventional Romanticist, H. F. Ewald, who wrote voluminous historical novels, the heroines of which were models of all the copy-book virtues, and the heroes as bloodless as their prototypes in *Ivanhoe* and *Waverly*. Instead of individualizing his *dramatis personæ*, this feeble successor of Walter Scott and Ingemann gave them a certificate of character, vouching for their virtues or shortcomings, and trusted the reader to take his word for it. All Ewald's writings are pervaded with a robust optimism and a warm Danish sentiment, which are just the qualities to com-

mend them to a half-educated public and, at the same time, to confirm the reputation of their author.

Bergsøe.

A minor degree of popularity was accorded to an author of a much higher order, Wilhelm Bergsøe, some of whose works made a great sensation in their day. In his *Fra Piazza del Popolo* is a fine description of the doings of the artistic guild in Rome, though intermingled with much superfluous mysticism and many romantic entanglements. *In the Sabine Mountains*, the scene of which is laid in Genazzano during the Italian struggle for independence, is somewhat prolix, and the effect is further impaired by its epistolary form. Nevertheless some portions of it are eloquent and entertaining. The historic whisperings which he catches from the names, the ruins, the facial types, the very trees and grass of Genazzano, invest his descriptions of that picturesque neighborhood with a certain beautiful glow of color, albeit it is only the dusky richness of decay. As the plot thickens, however, we find ourselves unexpectedly involved in a lurid tale of monks, priests, disguised revolutionists, and cruel, mercenary fathers, among whom the author plays his favorite rôle of *deus ex machinâ*.

Goldschmidt.

Among the representatives of expiring Danish Romanticism a leading position belongs to Meyer Aaron Goldschmidt, whose comic paper, *Corsaren*, with its

scathing satire, made a great sensation between 1840 and 1846. His works are full of psychological subtleties, and his stories are often charmingly told, some of them, including the *Flying Mail*, being translated into English. The best of them are those which deal with the Jews, though less dramatically effective than the writings of the later Ghetto romances. Goldschmidt's double nationality, as a Danish-born Jew, indicates the source from which he drew his weakness and his strength. As a Jew he saw and judged the Danish character, and as a Dane he saw and judged the Jewish character with a liberality and insight of which no one of purely Danish birth would have been capable.

George Brandes.

After the war of 1865, the man who undertook to bring Denmark again into rapport with Europe was Doctor George Brandes, in whose *Men of the Modern Transition* we make the acquaintance of the three authors who then represented whatever there was of promise in contemporary Danish literature—Sophus Schandorph, Holger Drachmann, and J. P. Jacobsen. Brandes was himself a voluminous writer; his biographical and critical essays are read with interest throughout the world. His *Main Currents of Nineteenth Century Literature* is the most complete and accurate review of European authorship which has yet been published. Though invited to remove to Berlin, he remained at Copenhagen. He did not contribute to the drama.

VI.

Norwegian Drama—Björnson.

The literature of Norway bears something of the same relation to that of Denmark as American literature bears to English. In each case the development and separation of a dependency have produced a desire on the part of persons speaking the mother tongue for a literature that shall express the local emotions and conditions of the new nation. Two notable and almost contemporaneous events led to the foundation of Norwegian literature; one was the creation of the university of Christiania, in 1811; the other was the separation of Norway from Denmark, in 1814. These events were the signal for intellectual as well as political independence. Before this time Norwegian writers had been content to publish their works at the Danish capital; they had now a capital of their own. Many talented men had meanwhile become, to all intents and purposes, Danish writers. The first name on the annals of Danish literature, Peder Claussön, is that of a Norwegian, and if all Norse writers were removed from that roll, the list would be poorer by some of its most illustrious names.

The famous Baron Ludvig Holberg, the founder of the Danish drama, whose career extended to the middle of the eighteenth century, was a Norwegian by birth, though in all else he belonged to Denmark. A Norwegian poet, Niels Krog Bredal, became, about 1770, a director of the Danish national theatre, and was the first who wrote lyrical dramas in that language. About the same time a Norwegian actor, Johan Nordahl Brun, who played at the same theatre, was the principal tragedian of his time, until the French school, to which he belonged, was laughed out of fashion by Wessel, himself also a Norseman.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a number of Norwegian poets wrote in their native tongue, among them Henrik Bjerregaard, author of the tragedy of *Magnus Barefoot's Son* and the lyrical drama of *The Adventure in the Mountain*. Many wrote on national themes, but without much knowledge, and in bondage to the conventional form in vogue at Copenhagen.

Wergeland.

The real founder of Norwegian literature in its proper sense was Henrik Arnold Wergeland, a man of great genius and enthusiasm, who contrived, within the limits of a life as short as Byron's, to concentrate the labors of a dozen ordinary men. His views were in many respects similar to those of Rousseau and Shelley; he never tired of preaching the dignity of man, the worth of liberty to the individual and of independence to the nation, and the relation of republican politics to a sound

form of literature. In Wergeland's earlier works, however, his own ideals of literature were anything but sound. His first efforts were wild and formless; he was full of imagination, but without taste and with a scanty stock of learning. He wrote a number of farces which are unworthy of mention, and those he followed by an unsuccessful tragedy, entitled *Sinclair's Death*. Nevertheless, at the age of twenty-one, he had become a power in literature and in the state. Soon afterward he published his monster epic, *Creation, Man and Messiah*, which showed no perceptible improvement. Thereupon he was taken to task by Welhaven and others, who handled him severely in their satires, with the result of bettering his style, as appears in a series of narrative poems in short lyrical metres, probably the best of their kind in Norwegian literature. His later dramatic works, *The Campbells*, the *Venetians*, and *The Cadets*, achieved no lasting success; but the poems of his last five years at once attained the popularity which they have ever since enjoyed. A very salutary influence was exercised by John Sebastian Welhaven, whose savage attack on *Henrik Wergeland's Poetry*, published in 1832, was the chief literary topic of the day.

Among later writers is Andreas Munch, whose historical dramas, especially *Solomon de Caus* and *Lord William Russell*, enjoyed a popularity greatly in excess of their merit. Kristoffer Jansen, whose career belongs in part to the United States, won fame as a novelist, and to this he added little by his historical tragedy of *Jon Arason* and his powerful but morbid drama, *A Woman's Fate*. Jonas Lie, after wavering long between the sen-

timental and realistic schools, finally joined the latter and wrote some excellent stories of seafaring life.

A National Poet.

Björnstjerne Björnson is the first Norwegian poet who can, in the proper sense, be called national. The genius of the nation, with its limitations as well as its virtues, found its living embodiment in him. Whenever he opened his mouth it was as if the nation itself were speaking. If he wrote a song, hardly a year elapsed before its phrases passed into the common speech of the people; composers competed for the honor of interpreting it in simple Norse-sounding melodies, which gradually worked their way from the drawing room to the kitchen, the street, and thence out over the fields and highlands of Norway. His tales, romances and dramas express collectively the supreme result of the nation's experience, so that no one to-day can view Norwegian life or Norwegian history except through their medium.

Björnson's Parentage and Childhood.

The modern champion of Norway—the typical Norseman—was born on December 8, 1832, on the wild and bleak Dovre mountain, where there is winter eight months of the year, and cold weather the remaining four. The parish of Kvikne, in Oesterdalen, in which it is situated, and where his father, the Reverend Peter Björnson, held a living, had a bad reputation on

account of the ferocity and brutal violence of the inhabitants.

When little Björnstjerne was six years old, however, his father was transferred to Romsdal, a wild and grandly picturesque region, but far less desolate than Dovre. "It lies," says Björnson, "broad-bosomed between two confluent fjords, with a green mountain above, cataracts and homesteads on the opposite shore, waving meadows and activity in the bottom of the valley; and all the way out toward the ocean, mountains with headland upon headland running out into the fjord and a large farm upon each."

The feeling of terror, the sense of guilt which Björnson has so strikingly portrayed in the first chapters of *In God's Way*, were familiar to his childhood. In every life, as in every race, the God of fear precedes the God of Love; and in northern Norway, where nature seems so tremendous and man so insignificant, no boy escapes these phantoms of dread which clutch him with icy fingers. But as a counterbalancing force in young Björnson, we have his confidence in the strength and good sense of his father, who could thrash the strongest man in the parish.

Education.

At the age of twelve, Björnson was sent to the Latin school at Molde, where, however, his progress was not encouraging. He was one of those thoroughly healthy and headstrong boys who are the despair of ambitious mothers, and whom fathers are apt to regard with a resigned and half humorous regret. His dislike of

books was instinctive, hearty and uncompromising. His strong, half-savage boy nature could brook no restraints and looked longingly homeward to the wide mountain plains, the foaming rivers, where the trout leaped in the summer night, and the calm fjord, where one might drift blissfully along, as it were, suspended in the midst of the vast, blue, ethereal space.

After several years of unsuccessful study, Björnson at last passed the so-called examen artium, which admitted him to the university of Christiania. He was now a handsome youth of large, athletic frame. There was a certain grand simplicity and naïveté in his manner, and an exuberance of animal spirits which must have made him an object of curious interest among his town-bred fellow students. But his university career was of brief duration. All the dimly fermenting powers of his rich nature were now beginning to clarify, the consciousness of his calling now began to assert itself, and the demand for expression became imperative. His literary début was an historic drama, entitled *Valborg*, which was accepted for representation by the directors of the Christiania theatre and procured for its author a free ticket to all performances; but it was never brought on the stage, as Björnson, having discovered its defects, withdrew it of his own accord.

At this time the Norwegian stage was almost wholly in the hands of the Danes, and all the more prominent actors were of Danish birth. Theatrical managers drew freely on the dramatic treasures of Danish literature, and occasionally, to replenish the exchequer, reproduced a French comedy or farce. Young Björnson,

in a series of vehement articles attacked the Danish actors, managers and all who were in any way responsible for the unworthy condition of the stage. In return he reaped, as might have been expected, an abundant harvest of abuse; but the discussion he had provoked furnished food for reflection, and the rapid development of the Norwegian drama during the next decade is, no doubt, largely traceable to his influence.

The liberty for which he had yearned so long, Björnson found at the International Student's reunion of 1856, when the members of the Norwegian and Danish universities met in Upsala, and were welcomed with a round of festivities by their Swedish brethren. Here the poet caught the first glimpse of a greater and freer life than moved within the narrow horizon of the Norwegian capital.

Synnöve Sunny Hill.

The next winter we find him in Copenhagen, laboring with an intensity of creative ardor which he had never known before. His striking appearance, the pithy terseness of his speech, and a certain naïve assertion and impatience of social restraint made him a notable figure in the polite and somewhat effeminate society of the Danish capital. There was a general expectation at the time that a great poet was to come, and although Björnson had as yet published nothing to justify the expectation, he found the people of Copenhagen ready to recognize in him the man who was to rouse the North from its long intellectual torpor,

and usher in a new era in its literature. The first proof of his strength he gave in the tale *Synnöve Solbakken*, or *Sunny Hill*, which he published in an illustrated weekly, and afterward in book form. It is a very unpretending story, idyllic in tone, but realistic in coloring, and redolent of the pine and spruce and birch of the Norwegian highlands.

In 1858 Björnson assumed the directorship of the theatre in Bergen, and there published his second tale, *Arne*, in which the same restraint, the same implicit confidence in the intelligence of his readers, the same firm-handed decision and vigor in the character-drawing, in fact, all the qualities which delighted the public in *Synnöve Solbakken*, were found in an intensified degree.

National Dramas.

In the meantime Björnson had also made his début as a dramatist. In 1858 he had published two dramas, *Between the Battles* and *Limping Hulda*, both of which deal with national subjects, taken from the old sagas. As in his tales he had endeavored to concentrate into a few strongly-defined types the modern folk-life of the North, so in his dramas the same innate love of his nationality leads him to seek the typical features of his people, as they are revealed in the historic chieftains of the past.

Between the Battles is a dramatic episode rather than a drama. During the civil war between King Sverre and King Magnus, in the twelfth century, the former visits in disguise a hut among the mountains, where a

young warrior, Halvard Gjaela, and Inga, his beloved, are living together. The long internecine strife has raised the hand of father against son and of brother against brother. Halvard sympathizes with Sverre; Inga, who hates the king because he had burned her father's barn, is a partisan of Magnus. In the absence of her lover she goes to the latter's camp and brings with her a dozen warriors for the purpose of capturing Halvard and thereby preventing him from joining the enemy. Sverre discovers the warriors, whom she has hidden in the cow-stable, and, persuading them that he is a spy from King Magnus, sends two of them to his own army for reinforcements. In the meantime he reconciles the estranged lovers, makes peace between them and Inga's father, and finally, in the last scene, as his men arrive, is recognized as their king.

This acceptable national play did not by any means represent so complete a breach with the traditions of the Romantic drama as was claimed by Björnson's admirers. The fresh naturalness and absence of declamation were a gain, no doubt; but there are several notes remaining which have the well-known romantic cadence. *Between the Battles*, though far from being a masterpiece, was accepted as a pledge of greater achievement in the future.

Björnson's *Limping Hulda* was a partial fulfilment of this pledge. If it is not high tragedy, it is of the stuff that tragedy is made. Hulda is an impressive stage figure in her demoniac passion and tiger-like tenderness. Though it is doubtful whether Björnson has caught in this type the soul of a Norse woman of

the saga age, he has come much nearer to it than any of his predecessors. If Gudrun Osvif's daughter, of the Laxdoela Saga, was his model, he has modernized her considerably, and thereby made her more intelligible to modern readers. Like her, Hulda causes the murder of the man she loves; and there is a fateful spell about her beauty which brings death to whosoever looks too long upon it. Though ostensibly a saga-drama, the harshness and the grim ferocity of that sanguinary period are softened; and a romantic illumination pervades the whole action. A certain lyrical effusiveness in the love passages, which is alien to all Björnson's later works, hints at the influence of the Danish Romanticists, and particularly Oehlenschläger.

A national theatre had, by the perseverance and generosity of Ole Bull, been established in his native city, Bergen; and it was almost a matter of course that an effort should be made to identify Björnson with an enterprise which accorded so well with his aspirations. His connection with this theatre was, however, not of long duration, for, though enthusiasm may be ever so great, it is a thankless task to act as "artistic director" of a stage in a town which is neither artistic enough nor large enough to support a playhouse with a higher aim than that of furnishing ephemeral amusement. From Bergen Björnson was called to the editorship of *The Evening Journal*, the second political daily of Christiania, and continued there with zeal and eloquence his battle for "all that is truly Norse."

But for journalism Björnson had neither taste nor

ability. He was too indiscreet, too hasty and credulous to be a successful editor; he could not stoop to time-serving, and he had none of the small change of literature necessary for the equipment of a newspaper writer.

Small Pieces.

Forsaking journalism, Björnson published in Copenhagen a volume which has become one of the classics of Norwegian literature. *Small Pieces*, it is modestly entitled, but it contains some of the author's noblest work. Among the pieces is *The Father*, a tale of remarkable strength and sobriety, a tragedy told in few and simple words. Others of special merit are *A Happy Boy* and the amusing dialect story of *A Dangerous Wooing*. These masterpieces of concise story-telling were afterward included in a popular two-volume edition, which contained also *The Fishermaiden*, the exquisite story of *The Bridal March*, and *Blakken*, a vigorous specimen of disguised autobiography, of which a horse is the ostensible hero.

King Sverre.

Three years, beginning with the spring of 1860, Björnson devoted to foreign travel, spending most of this time in Italy. From Rome he sent the historical drama *King Sverre*, which is one of his weakest productions. It is written in blank verse, with occasional rhymes in the more impressive passages. Though of slight dramatic interest, in the ordinary sense, it con-

tains a series of more or less animated scenes from the period of the great civil war, connected by the personality of Sverre. Under the mask, however, of mediæval history, the author preaches a political sermon to his contemporaries. Sverre, as the champion of the common people against the tribal aristocracy, and the wily Bishop Nicholas, as the representative of the latter, become, as it were, permanent forces, which have continued their battle to the present day. There can be no doubt that Björnson, whose sympathies were strongly democratic, permitted the debate between the two to become needlessly didactic, and strained historical verisimilitude, to the dislike of opponents, by veiled allusions to contemporaneous conditions.

Sigurd Slembe.

Greatly superior is his next drama, *Sigurd Slembe*, an English version of which was published in Boston in 1888. The story of this brave and able defender in the struggle with the mean and vain king, Harold Gille, is in the form of a dramatic trilogy. Björnson attempts to give the spiritual development of Sigurd from the moment he becomes acquainted with his royal birth until his final destruction. From a frank and generous youth, who is conscious that he is born for something great, he is driven by the treachery, cruelty, and deceit of his brother, the king, into the position of a desperate outlaw and guerilla. The very first scene in the church of St. Olaf, where the boy confides to the saint, in a tone of *bonne camaraderie*, his joy at having con-

quered, in wrestling, the greatest champion in the land, gives the key note to his character :

Now only listen to me, saintly Olaf!
To-day I whipped young Beintein! Beintein was
The strongest man in Norway. Now am I!
Now I can walk from Lindesnäs and on,
Up to the northern boundary of the snow,
For no one step aside or lift my hat.
There where I am, no man hath leave to fight,
To make a tumult, threaten, or to swear—
Peace everywhere! And he who wrong hath suffered
Shall justice find, until the laws shall sing.
And as before the great have whipped the small,
So will I help the small to whip the great.
Now I can offer counsel at the Thing,
Now to the king's board I can boldly walk
And sit beside him, saying "Here am I!"

The exultation in victory which speaks in every line of this opening monologue marks the man who, in spite of the obscurity of his origin, feels his right to be first, and who, in this victory, celebrates the attainment of his birthright. According to the Norwegian law, at that time, every son of a king was entitled to his share of the kingdom, and Sigurd's first impulse is to go straight to Harold Gille and demand his right. A friend persuades him, however, to abandon this hopeless adventure, and gives him a ship with which he sails to the Orient, takes part in many wars, and gains experience and martial renown.

The second part of the trilogy deals with Sigurd's sojourn on the Orkneys, where he interferes in a quarrel between the earls Harold and Paul. The atmos-

phere of suspicion, insecurity, and gloom which hangs like a portentous cloud over these scenes is the very same which appears in the pages of the sagas. Björnson has gazed deeply into the heart of Northern paganism, and has here reproduced the heroic anarchy which was a necessary result of the code permitting the individual to avenge his own wrongs. The two awful women, Helga and Frakark, the mother and the aunt of the earls, are types which are constantly met with in the sagas. It is a long-recognized fact that women, under lawless conditions, develop the wildest extremes of ambition, avarice, and bloodthirstiness, and taunt the men with their weak scruples. These two furies of the Orkneys plot murder with an infernal coolness which makes Lady Macbeth a kind-hearted woman by comparison. They recognize in Sigurd a man born for leadership; determine to use him for the furtherance of their plans, and to get rid of him by fair or foul means, when he shall have accomplished his task. But Sigurd is too experienced a chieftan to walk into this trap. While appearing to acquiesce, he plays for stakes of his own, but in the end abandons all in disgust at the death of Harold, who intentionally puts on the poisoned shirt prepared for his brother. There is no great and impressive scene in this part, such as would engrave itself deeply upon the memory. The love passages with Audhild, the young cousin of the earls, are incidental and episodic, and exert no considerable influence upon Sigurd's character or upon the development of the intrigue. Historically they are well and realistically conceived, but dramatically they are not strong.

The third part opens with Sigurd's appearance at court, where he reveals his origin and asks for his share of the kingdom. The king is not disinclined to grant his request, but is overruled by his councillors, who profit by his weakness and rule in his name. They fear this man of many battles, with the mark of kingship on his brow; and they determine to murder him. But Sigurd escapes from prison, and holding the king responsible for the treachery, kills him. From this time forth he is an outlaw, hunted over field and fell, and roaming with untold sufferings through the mountains and wilderness. There he meets a Finnish maiden who loves him, reveals his fate to him, and implores him to abandon his ambition and dwell among her people. These scenes amid the eternal wastes of snow are perhaps the most striking in the trilogy and abound in exquisite poetic thought. Sigurd hastens to his doom at the battle of Holmengra, where he is defeated, and with fiendish atrocity, slowly tortured to death. The monologue preceding his death, in which he bids farewell to life and calmly adjusts his gaze to eternity, is very beautiful, but historically a trifle out of tune. Barring these occasional lapses, the trilogy of *Sigurd Slembe* is a noble work.

Mary Stuart in Scotland.

A respectful, and in part enthusiastic reception, had been accorded Björnson's early plays; but the first real dramatic triumph was celebrated at the performance of his *Mary Stuart in Scotland*. Externally this is the

most effective of his plays. The dialogue is often brilliant, and bristles with telling points. It is eminentlyactable, presenting striking tableaux and situations. Behind the author we catch a glimpse of the practical stage manager, who knows how a scene will look on the boards, and how a speech will sound—who can surmise with tolerable accuracy how they will affect a first-night audience.

Mary Stuart is theatrically far superior to Swinburne's *Chastelard*—not to speak of the interminable musical verbiage of the latter—but it is paler, colder, and poetically inferior. The voluptuous warmth and wealth of color, the exquisite levity, the débonnaire grace of the Swinburnian drama we seek in vain. Björnson is vigorous, but he is not subtle. Mere feline amorousness, such as Swinburne so inimitably portrays, he would disdain to deal with, even if he could.

Schiller, whose conception of womankind was as honestly single and respectful as that of Björnson, has set a notable precedent in representing *Mary Stuart* as a martyr of a lost cause. The psychological antitheses of her character, her softness and loving surrender, and her treachery and cruelty, he left out of account. Without troubling himself about her guilt, which, though with many palliating circumstances he admitted, he undertook to exemplify in her the beauty and exaltation of noble suffering. His *Mary*, which has always been a favorite with tragic actresses, is as devoid of that insinuating, sense-compelling charm which alone can account for this extraordinary woman's career as is the heroine of Björnson's play. In fact Björnson's *Mary*

lies half way between the amorous young tigress of Swinburne and the statuesque martyr of Schiller. She is less intricately feminine than the former, and more so than the latter. But she is yet a long way removed from her historical original, who must have been a strong and full-blooded character, with just that touch of mystery which Nature always wears to whosoever gazes deeply upon her. That subtle intercoiling of antagonistic traits, which, in a man could never coexist, is to be found in many historic women of the Renaissance, exquisite, dangerous creatures, half-doves, half-serpents, half-Clytemnestra, half-Venus, whose full throbbing passion now made them soft and tender, over-brimming with loveliness, now fierce and imperious, their outraged pride revelling in vengeance and blood.

If Björnson could have fathomed the depth and complexity of the historical Mary Stuart to the extent that Swinburne has done, he would, no doubt, have devised a more effective conclusion to his play. There is no dramatic climax, far less a tragic one, in the dethronement of Mary and the proclamation of John Knox, which is chiefly an assertion of popular sovereignty, and the triumph of the Presbyterian Church. The declaration of the final chorus, that

Evil shall be routed
And weakness must follow;
The might of truth shall pierce
To the last retreat of gloom.

seems rather to muddle than clarify the situation. There is a wavering and uncertain sound in it, which

seems inappropriate to a triumphant strain, when the organist should turn on the full force of his organ. If, as is obvious, the queen represents the evil, or at least the weakness, which is to be routed, it would appear that she ought to have been painted in different colors.

The Newly-Married.

Björnson's next dramatic venture, which to this day still enjoys a certain popularity, was the two-act comedy *The Newly-Married*. Goethe once made the remark that he was not a good dramatist, because his nature was too conciliatory, and, without disparagement, we may apply the same judgment to Björnson. His sunny optimism shrinks from irreconcilable conflicts and insoluble problems; and, in his desire to reconcile and solve, he is occasionally in danger of wrenching his characters out of drawing and muddling their motives.

The situation in *The Newly-Married* is an extremely delicate one, and required delicate handling. Axel, a young and gifted lawyer, has married Laura, the daughter of a high and wealthy official, who prides himself on his family dignity and connections. Laura, being an only child, has been petted and spoiled since her birth, and is but a grown-up little girl, with no conceptions of her matrimonial obligations. She subordinates her relation to her husband to that of her parents, and exasperates the former by her bland and obstinate immaturity. At last, being able to bear it no longer, he compels her to leave the home of her parents, where they have hitherto been living, and establishes himself

in a distant town. Mathilde, Laura's friend, accompanies them, though it is difficult to conjecture in what capacity, and publishes an anonymous novel, in which she enlightens the young wife regarding the probable results of her conduct. She thrusts a lamp into the dusk of her soul and frightens her by the things she shows her. She also, by arousing her jealousy, leads her out of childhood, with its veiled vision and happy ignorance, into womanhood, with its unflinching recognition of the realities that were hidden from the child. And thus she prepares the reconciliation which takes place in the presence of the old people, who pay their daughter a visit en route for Italy. Mathilde, having accomplished her mission, acknowledges the authorship of the anonymous novel, and is now content to leave husband and wife in the confidence that they will work out their salvation.

A mere sketch of this simple plot, which barely hints at the real problem, can, of course, give no conception of the charm, the color, and the wonderful poetic afflatus of this exquisite little play. It may be well enough to say that such a situation is far-fetched and not very typical—that outside of “the heavenly twins,” *et id genus omne*, wives who insist upon remaining maidens are not very frequent; but, in spite of this drawback, the vividness and the emotional force of the dialogue and the beautiful characterization, particularly of the old governor and his wife, set certain sweet chords in vibration, and carry the play to a triumphant issue.

“As a school-boy,” says one of Björnson's critics, “I witnessed the first performance of *The Newly-Married*,

at the Christiania theatre, in 1865, and I remember my surprise when, instead of Norse warriors, carousing in a sooty hall, the curtain rose upon a modern interior, in which a fashionably-attired young lady kissed a frock-coated old gentleman. It was a disappointment to me, who had come thirsting for gore. But how completely the poet conquered us!"

Poems and Songs.

Between 1865 and 1867 Björnson occupied the position of artistic director of the Christiania theatre, and also edited a popular weekly journal; becoming the champion of Norwegian nationality both in literature and on the stage. His spare time was devoted to poetry, and in 1870 was published his now classical collection of *Poems and Songs*, which marks a new era in Norwegian lyric verse. Had Björnson written nothing else, this volume alone would have stamped him as the foremost of Norway's poets. It contains a legacy to the people which can never grow old, and it has made richer and more beautiful the life of every Norseman, whether he is willing to acknowledge it or not. Here is none of the braggadocio, the blare of trumpets to be found in the patriotic lyrics of Wergeland and Welhaven, of Bjerregard, Wolff and others, with such titles as *The Roaring Northern Main*, *Norway's Lion*, and *Norway's Rocky Fastnesses*, sung at festival gatherings side by side with Björnson's *Yes, we Love our Native Country* and *I will Guard Thee, My Land!* Calm, strong, and aglow with patriotism, he has no need of

SIGURD BEFORE WALKYRIE CASTLE

after an original painting by R. Deygas



going into paroxysms to prove his sincerity. The Norseman never tires of these simple verses:

Yes, we love this land of ours,
Rising from the foam,
Rugged, furrowed, weather-beaten,
With its thousand homes.

Doubtless they owe much to Kjerulf's fine music, and if one is disposed to pick flaws, the verses are by no means faultless. The transition is sometimes abrupt, and the rhyme and prosody incorrect. But for all this, the songs touch a chord in every Norseman's breast, which never fails to vibrate responsively.

Sigurd the Crusader.

Of the saga-drama, *Sigurd the Crusader*, which was published in 1870 and was one of his minor works, the purpose may be stated in the author's own words:

"*Sigurd the Crusader* is meant to be what is called a 'folk-play.' It is my intention to make several dramatic experiments with grand scenes from the sagas, lifting them into a strong but not too heavy frame. By a 'folk play' I mean a play which should appeal to every eye and every stage of culture, to each in its own way, and at the performance of which all, for the time being, would experience the joy of fellow-feeling. The common history of a people is best available for this purpose; nay, it ought never to be dramatically treated otherwise. The treatment must necessarily be simple and the emotions predominant; it should be ac-

accompanied with music, and the development should progress in clear groups.

"The old as well as the new historic folk-literature will, with its corresponding comic element, as I think, be a great gain to the stage, and will preserve its connections with the people where this has not already been lost—so that it be no longer a mere institution for amusement, and that only to a single class. Unless we take this view of our stage, it will lose its right to be regarded as a national affair, and the best part of its purpose—to unite while it lifts and makes us free—will be gradually assumed by some other agency. Nor shall we ever get actors fit for anything but trifles, unless we abandon our foreign French tendency as a leading one, and substitute the national needs of our own people in its place."

VII.

Björnson's Later Works—Kielland.

When Björnson wrote *Sigurd the Crusader* he was thirty-eight years of age, and he had now come to a period of his career when, to those who are spiritually alive, their scholastic culture and the sources which tradition supplies begin to appear insufficient. It is as though one should wake up and see his past life in a new and strange illumination, with the dust of ages lying inch-thick upon his thoughts. To men who have the courage to face it, this crisis is apt to occur between the ages of thirty and forty. Ibsen was thirty-four when, in *The Comedy of Love*, he broke loose from the Romanticism of his youth, and began to wrestle with the real problems of modern life. Goethe was thirty-seven when he turned his back upon the Storm and Stress, and in Italy gained a new and saner vision of the world. Björnson had up to this time built solely upon tradition. He had been orthodox, and had exalted childlike peace and faith above doubt and struggle, and phrases indicating a certain spiritual immaturity are scattered through his early poems. He says, for instance, "The greatest man on earth must cherish the

child in his soul, and listen, amid the thunder, to what it whispers low." This may be true enough, or at least a half-truth; but the man who at forty assumes the child's attitude of mere wondering acceptance toward the world and its problems, though he may be a very estimable character, will never attain to greatness. It is the honest doubters, the questioners, the fighters who have broken humanity's shackles, and made the world a better place to live in. There is a strain of Danish Romanticism in Björnson's persistent harping upon childlike faith and simplicity; for he fully sympathized with the revolt of the Romantic school against the rationalism of the so-called period of enlightenment.

An Unprogressive Community.

That so mighty a spirit as Björnson's should have reached middle life before emerging from his idyllic state was due in part to his environment which is thus described by Brandes, "the cultivated, and especially the half-cultivated, public in Denmark and Norway dreamed that they were the salt of Europe. They dreamed that by their idealism and their strong vigilance they regenerated the foreign nations. They dreamed that they were the power which could rule the world, but which, for mysterious and incomprehensible reason, had for a long series of years preferred to eat crumbs from the foreigners' table. They dreamed that they were the free, mighty North, which led the cause of the nations to victory—and they woke up to find themselves bondsmen, impotent, ignorant."

While this is severe, it is none the less true. After the disasters of the Schleswig-Holstein war, Scandinavia had by her own choice cut herself off from cosmopolitan intercourse, and the great ideas which agitated Europe found hardly an echo in the three kingdoms. On all hands were mutual congratulations that the doubt and restlessness which were undermining foreign communities had never ruffled the placid surface of good, old-fashioned Scandinavian orthodoxy.

Political Conditions.

All this must be taken into account in measuring the significance, as well as the courage, of Björnson's apostasy. He plunged with hot zeal into political life, not only because he needed an outlet for his energies, but because the question at issue engrossed him, heart and soul. The equal position of Norway and Sweden had been guaranteed by the constitution of 1814; but, as a matter of fact, the former kingdom was regarded by all the world as a dependency, if not a province, of the latter. The country had been misgoverned, first by the Bernadottes, who were as purblind as bats in their dealings with Norway, and then by Charles XV. and Oscar II., who retained in power their minority ministries under Sang and Selmer, with an utter disregard of popular condemnation, and snapped their fingers at the parliamentary majorities which, for nearly a quarter of a century, fought bravely and persistently for their country's rights.

Though vastly behind the age, Norway had now be-

come the most democratic country in Europe. Not even in the United States was there a sturdier sense of personal worth, a more fearless assertion of equality. Sweden, on the other hand, was essentially an aristocratic country, with a landed nobility and many other remnants of feudalism. Two countries so different in character could never live under the same yoke, albeit there was the strongest sympathy and respect between the democracies in Norway and Sweden. It was Björnson who, in 1873, began the agitation for the actual, and not merely nominal, equality of the two kingdoms. He appealed to the national sense of honor, and by his kindling eloquence aroused the popular movement which swept the old Stang ministry from power, and caused the impeachment and condemnation of the Selmer party. For a time the reformers triumphed; but unhappily a new Stang ministry, under the son of the old premier, reëstablished, in 1893, the old minority rule, which sat, like a nightmare, on the nation's breast, preventing its natural development.

Björnson as a Liberator.

There was, of course, much difference of opinion as to the work which Björnson had accomplished in his capacity as political and religious liberator. The conservative party in Norway, which ran the errands of the king and truckled to Sweden, hated him with a bitter and furious hatred; the clergy denounced him; and the official bureaucracy could not mention his name without an anathema. But the common people loved

him, though many were frightened away by his heterodoxy.

While serving his country, Björnson had made himself acquainted with the writings of modern scientists and philosophers. He had studied Darwin, Spencer, and John Stuart Mill; he had become familiar with the works of Steinthal and Max Müller, whose researches in comparative religion changed for him the whole aspect of the universe. Taine's historical criticism had lured him far away from his old Norse landmarks, until there was no longer any thought of returning to them. When he looked back on his idyllic love-stories of peasant lads and lassies, and his taciturn saga heroes, he saw that he had done with them forever. It was the problems of modern life that tempted him, and of these he had gained a new comprehension. Henceforth he would consecrate his powers to the study of the deeper soul-life of his own age, and the exposition of the forces which in their interdependence and interaction give shape to modern society.

Bankruptcy.

This is the significance of the four-act drama *Bankruptcy*, with which, in 1874, Björnson astonished and disappointed the Scandinavian public. Though styled a drama on the title-page, it is in the best sense a comedy of manners, of the kind that Augier produced in France; and in everything except the mechanics of construction it is superior to the plays of Sardou and Dumas. The dialogue has the most admirable accent

of truth. It is not unnaturally witty or brilliant; but exhibits exactly the traits which Norwegians of the higher commercial plutocracy were likely to exhibit. All the poetic touches that charmed us in Björnson's saga dramas are conspicuous by their absence, and hardly a trace is left of the peculiar and delightful language of his early novels, which can only be described by the term Björnsonian.

"Dry, prosaic, trivial," said the reviewers; "Björnson has evidently worked out his vein. He has ceased to be a poet. He has lost with his childhood's faith his ideal view of life, and become a mere prosy chronicler of uninteresting every-day events."

This was, indeed, the general verdict of the public. Scarcely anyone had a good word to say for the much-abused play that was supposed to mark the poet's fall from the idealism of his early song. But, for all that, *Bankruptcy* made a strong impression on the boards. It not only conquered a permanent place in the répertoires of the theatres of the Scandinavian capitals, but it spread through Austria, Germany, and Holland, and finally scored a success in Paris. There was hardly a theatre of any consequence in Germany which did not make *Bankruptcy* part of its stock in trade. At the Royal theatre in Munich it was accorded a most triumphant reception, and scores of almost consecutive representations did not exhaust its popularity.

The effort to come to close quarters with reality is visible in every phrase. The denial of the value of all the old romantic stage machinery, with its artificial climaxes and explosive effects, is perceptible in the

quiet endings of the acts and the entirely unsensational exposition of the dramatic action. There is one scene in which there is a touch of violence, where Tjælde, while he hopes to avert his bankruptcy, threatens to shoot Lawyer Berent and himself; but there is a very human quiver in the threat and in the passionate outbreak which precedes it. Nowhere is there a breath of that superheated hothouse atmosphere which too often pervades the modern drama.

Yet this play could hardly satisfy an English audience of any class, and never an American. English-speaking people still believe that drama means action, and at the play insist on seeing things done, or in high tragedy may accept suffering that is manifest and palpable. Though many of them may show deep interest in brief articles or even lengthy novels discussing social problems of the present day, yet when they go to the theatre they will not be content with tame conclusions.

The Editor.

Björnson's next play, *The Editor*, grapples with an equally modern and timely subject, and that is the license of the press. With terrible vividness he shows the misery, ruin, and degradation which result from the journalistic practice of misrepresentation, sophistry, and defamation. It is a very dark picture he draws, with scarcely a gleam of light. The satire is savage, and the quiver of wrath is perceptible in many a sledge-hammer phrase. We feel that Björnson himself has suffered from the terrorism which he here describes,

and we surmise that the editor whom he has here pilloried is no mere editorial type, but a well-known person who, until recently, conducted one of the most influential journals in Norway. The play is an act of retribution, and a deserved one. But its weaknesses, which it is vain to disguise, are also explained by the author's personal bias—the desire to wreak vengeance upon an enemy.

Björnson's Radicalism.

Björnson's increasing radicalism and his outspoken socialistic sympathies had by this time alienated a large portion of the Scandinavian public. The cry was heard on all sides that he had ceased to be a poet, and had become instead a mere political agitator. Here is Björnson's reply when, at his request, a friend repeated the opinion which was entertained of him in certain quarters:

"Oh, yes," he cried, with a wrathful laugh, "don't I know it? You must be a poet! You must not mingle in the world's harsh and jarring tumult. They have a notion that a poet is a long-haired man who sits on the top of a tower and plays upon a harp while his hair streams in the wind. Yes, a fine kind of a poet is that! No, my boy, I am a poet, not primarily because I write verse—there are lots of people who can do that—but by virtue of seeing more clearly, and feeling more deeply, and speaking more truly than the majority of men. All that concerns humanity concerns me. If by my song or my speech I can contribute ever so little toward the amelioration of the lot of the millions of my

poorer fellow-creatures, I shall be prouder of that than of the combined laurels of Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe.

The King.

The drama of *The King* is an attack upon the monarchial principle in its political as well as in its personal aspect. It is shown how destructive the royal prerogative is and must be to the king as an individual; how the artificial regard which hedges him in, interposing countless barriers between him and the truth, makes his relations to his surroundings false, and deprives him of the opportunity for self-knowledge which normal relations supply. Royalty is therefore a curse, because it robs its possessor of the wholesome discipline of life, which is the right of every man that is born into this world.

Furthermore, there is an obvious intention to show that the monarchy being founded upon a lie, is incapable of any real adaptation to the age, or of reconciliation with modern progress. The king, in the play, is a young, talented, liberal-minded man, who is fully conscious of the anomaly of his position, and determined to save his throne by stripping it of all mediæval and mythological garniture. He dreams of being a "folk-king," the first citizen of a free people, a kind of hereditary president, with no sham divinity to fall back upon, and no "grace of God" to shield him from criticism and sanctify his blunders. He resents the rôle of being the lock of the merchant's strong box and the head of that mutual insurance company which is

called the state. He goes about incognito, first in search of love adventures, and later in order to acquaint himself with public opinion; and he proves himself remarkably unprejudiced and capable of profiting by experience. He falls in love with Clara Ernst, the daughter of a radical professor, who, on account of a book he has written, has been sentenced for *lèse majesté*, and in an attempt to escape from prison has broken both his legs. Clara, who is supporting her father in exile by teaching, repels the king's advances with indignation and repulsion. He perseveres, however, fascinated by the novelty of such treatment. He manages to convince her of the purity of his motives; and finally succeeds in winning her love. It is not a *liaison* he contemplates, but a valid and legitimate marriage for which he means to compel recognition. The court, which he has no more use for, he desires to abolish as a costly and degrading luxury; and in its place to establish a home—a model bourgeois home—where affection and virtue shall flourish.

Clara, seeing the vast significance of such a step, is aglow with enthusiasm for its realization. It is not vanity, but a lofty faith in her mission to regenerate royalty, by discarding its senseless pomp, and bringing it into accord with, and down to the level of, common citizenship—it is this which upholds her in the midst of opprobrium, insults, and hostile demonstrations. For the king's subjects, so far from being charmed by his resolution to marry a woman from out of their midst, are scandalized. They riot, sing mocking songs, circulate base slanders, and threaten to mob the royal

bride on her way to her first public function. She is herself terribly wrought up, particularly by the curse of her father, who hates the king with the deep hatred of a fanatical Republican. A royal princess, who has come to insult her, is conquered by her candor and truth, and stays to sympathize with her and lend her the support of her presence. But just as the king comes to lead her out to face the populace, the wraith of her father rises upon the threshold and she falls back dead. It is learned afterward that Professor Ernst had died in that very hour.

The king's bosom friend, the minister of the interior, Gran, who is largely responsible for his liberalism, and whose whole policy it has been to rejuvenate and revitalize the monarchy, is challenged and shot by his old teacher; and the king himself, convinced of the futility of all efforts to realize his idea of a democratic monarchy, commits suicide.

Björnson did not, however, intend *The King* as an argument in favor of the republic, and in his preface to the third edition of this drama he distinctly repudiates the idea. The recent development of the Norwegian people, has, he says, made the republic a remoter possibility than it was ten years before—in 1875; and he adds to his statement the significant condition, "If we were not checked by fraud." Certain it is that a few years later, he might have justified his position by demonstrating the fraud, trickery, if not treason, by which Norway was thwarted in her aspirations and checked in her development. The preface, dated Paris, 1885, is one of the most forceful and luminous of his

political pronunciamientos; it rings from beginning to end with conviction and manly indignation. His chief purpose, he says, in writing this drama was, to extend the boundaries of free discussion. His polemics against the clergy are not attacks upon Christianity, though he contends that religion is subject to growth as well as other things. The ultimate form of government he believes to be the republic, on the journey toward which all European countries are proceeding in various stages of progress.

Leonarda.

A further attempt to extend the boundaries of free discussion is made in *Leonarda* and *A Gauntlet*, both of which dramas deal with interesting phases of the woman question, and both wage war against conventional notions of right and wrong. The former elucidates the attitude of society toward the woman who has been compromised—whether justly or not—and the latter its attitude toward the man. There is something a trifle hazy in Björnson's exposition of the problem in *Leonarda*, and we are unable to determine whether she really has anything to reproach herself with. In her conversation with the bishop, in the second act, she appears to admit that she has much to regret, and she begs him "help her atone for the past." She practically throws herself upon his mercy, reminding him that his master, Christ, was the friend of sinners; but in the last act she appears suddenly with the halo of martyrdom. Björnson's conceptions seem to have varied as he wrote, and he did not finally reconcile them.

General Rosen, who has been the cause of her social ostracism, turns out to be her husband, whom she has divorced on account of dissipated habits, and now keeps, in the hope of saving him, on a sort of probation. She believes that, without her, he would go straight to perdition, and from a sense of duty she tolerates him, not daring to shirk her responsibility for the old reprobate's soul. But Leonarda presently falls in love with a young man named Hagbart Tallhaug, who has insulted her and is now engaged to her niece, Agot. Hagbart is the nephew of the bishop of the diocese, who, after much persuasion, is induced to receive Agot, on condition that her aunt will move from the district and demand no recognition from the family. Having been informed of these conditions, Leonarda calls upon the bishop, uninvited, and vainly remonstrates with him. The young people are, however, unwilling to accept happiness on the terms offered by his reverence.

At this point a new complication arises. Hagbart, who has loved in Agot, a kind of reflection of her aunt's character and manner, being now thrown into the company of the latter, discovers his mistake and transfers his affections to Leonarda. Exactly wherein the newness of Leonarda's type consists we are not fully informed. She struggles bravely against her love for Hagbart, and at last has no chance but to escape from the cruel dilemma by accepting the bishop's demand. Though she cannot conquer her affection for the young man, she believes that he will, in the course of time, return to Agot, as soon as she is out of his way. The author evidently believes the same. It is a hard lot to

be a man in these later dramas of Björnson. The queer complications he presents seem to have been contrived for the purpose of interesting the public, but have actually resulted in a muddle which no ingenuity can clear up. He may have been trying to surpass Ibsen in this line, but his ability as a framer of plots has been strained beyond his capacity.

A Gauntlet.

The following is an outline of his next play: Svava Riis, the daughter of prosperous and refined parents, becomes engaged to Alf Christensen, the son of a great commercial magnate. Her father and mother are overjoyed at the happy event, and she is herself no less delighted. Her fiancé has an excellent reputation, shares her interest in social questions, and supports her in her efforts to found kindergartens and to ameliorate the lot of the poor. Each glories in the exclusive possession of the other's love, and with the retrospective jealousy of lovers, each fancies that no predecessor has won the affection of the beloved. Alf can hardly endure to have any one touch Svava, and is almost ill when any one dances with her. "When I see you among all the others," he exclaims, "and catch, for instance, a glimpse of your arm, then I think that arm has been wound about my neck, and about no one else's in the world. She is mine! She belongs to me, and to no one, no one else!"

Svava finds this feeling perfectly natural, and reciprocates it. She ardently believes that he brings her

a heart as fresh as she brings him, and that his past is as free from contaminating experiences as her own. When, therefore, she obtains proof to the contrary, in an indignant revulsion of feeling, she hurls her glove in his face and breaks the engagement. This act is probably intended to be half symbolic. The young girl expresses not only her personal sense of outrage; but she flings a challenge in the face of the community, which by its indulgence made his transgression easy. She discovers that what in her would have been a crime is in him a lapse, readily forgiven. Her whole soul revolts against this inequality of conditions.

In the present condition of the world the sentiment as to perfect purity in the male sex is certainly a trifle overstrained. Svava, whatever she may have said to the contrary, did not really love her fiancé; her sorrow and even her indignation were just and natural; but her overconscious purity and her inability to give weight to ameliorating circumstances were unwomanly. Though she may be right in her vehement protest against masculine immorality, Svava is not charming—that is, according to what constitutes our present notion of womanly charm. It is not improbable, however, that, like Leonarda, she is meant to anticipate a new type of womanhood, coördinate and coequal with man, whose charm shall be of a wholly different order. The coquetry, the sweet hypocrisy, nay, all the frivolous arts which exercise such a potent sway over the heart of man have their roots in prehistoric thralldom, and from the point of view of the woman suffragists, are so many reminiscences of degradation. Björnson, sharing this view, has

with full deliberation made Svava boldly and inexorably truthful, frank as a boy and as uncompromisingly honest as a man.

The heroine has sufficient use for this masculine equipment in the battle which is before her. Doctor Nordan, the family physician, her parents, and those of her fiancé, take her to task and endeavor to demonstrate to her the consequences of her unprecedented demand. She learns in the course of this prolonged debate that she has been living in a fool's paradise. She has been purposely, but with the most benevolent intentions, deceived in regard to this question from the very cradle. Her father, whom she has believed to be a model husband, proves to be unworthy of her trust. The elder Christensen has also had a compromising intrigue of the same kind; and it becomes obvious that each male creature is so indulgent in this chapter toward every other male creature, because each knows himself to be equally vulnerable. There is a sort of tacit freemasonry among them, which takes its revenge upon him who tells tales out of school. It is a consciousness of this which makes Christensen, after having declared war to the knife against the Riises, withdraw his challenge and become doubly cordial toward his enemy. Alf, who in the second act has expressed the opinion that a man is responsible to his wife for his future, but not for his past, retracts and does penance. Svava, in consideration of his penitence, gives him a vague hope of future reconciliation.

A Gauntlet is not a drama, according to our American notion. It has very little dramatic action, and

might be styled a series of brilliant and searching debates concerning a theme of great moment. The same definition applies, though in a lesser degree, to *The New System*—a five-act play of great power and beauty. By power is not meant noise, but impressiveness and concentration of interest. One could scarcely imagine anything further removed from the style of melodrama.

The New System.

The New System is primarily a social satire. It is a psychological analysis of the effect of the "small state" upon its citizens. It is an expansion and exemplification of the proposition, as we read in the first act, that "while the great state cannot subsist without sacrificing their small people by the thousands, small states cannot exist without the sacrifice of many of their great men, nay of the very greatest." The smooth, crafty man, "who can smile ingratiatingly like a woman," rises to the greatest heights, while the bold, strong, capable man, who is unversed in the arts of humility and intrigue, struggles hopelessly, and perhaps in the end goes to the dogs, because he is denied the proper field for his energy. Never has Björnson written any thing more convincing, penetrating, subtly satirical. He cuts deep; every incision draws blood. A Norwegian who reads the play cannot well rid himself of a startled sense of exposure that is at first wounding to his patriotism. It is mortifying to have to admit that things are thus in Norway. And the worst of it is that there appears to be no remedy. The

condition is, according to Björnson, inherent in all small states, which cripple the souls of men, stunt their growth, and contract their horizon.

The play is too lengthy here to be described in detail, though it contains many amusing scenes, as the one where three young women, taking with them a stock of high-strung novels, go for a boating trip, and when a drowning man calls to them for help, row away in all haste, because the man is naked. That the satire of *The New System* struck home is obvious from the fierceness and virulence of the criticism with which it was hailed. It has never become fairly domesticated on the Scandinavian stage, and probably never will be; but in Germany, France and Holland it has received respectful attention, and has proved extremely effective upon the boards.

Beyond Their Strength.

In *Beyond their Strength* Björnson has invaded the twilight realm of psycho-pathological phenomena, concerning which no attempt will be made to pronounce upon the validity of the theory here advanced. The play is an inquiry into the significance and authenticity of miracles. Incidentally the theme is faith-healing, the hypnotic power of prayer, and kindred phenomena.

Peter Sang, a clergyman in a remote parish of northern Norway, is famed far and wide as the miracle priest, and it is popularly believed that he can work wonders, as the apostles did of old. He has given away his large fortune to the poor; in a fervor of faith he

plunges into every danger and comes out unscathed; he lives constantly in an overstrained ecstasy, and by his mere presence and the atmosphere which surrounds him, forces his wife and children to live in the same state of high nervous tension and unnatural abstraction from the world and all it concerns. His wife, Clara, who loves him ardently, is gradually worn out by this perpetual strain, which involves a daily overdraft upon her vitality; and finally the break comes, and she is paralyzed; for, like every one who comes in contact with Sang, she has had to live "beyond her strength." She does not fully share her husband's faith, and though she feels his influence and admires his lofty devotion, there is a half-suppressed criticism in her mind. She feels the unwholesomeness of thus "living by inspiration, and not by reason." When he comes to her "beaming always with a Sabbath joy," she would fain tune him down, if she could, into a lower key, "the C-major of everyday life," as Browning calls it. But in the effort she has had no success; for Sang's ecstatic elevation above the concerns of earth is not only temperamental; nature itself, in the extreme North, favors it.

It is the earnest desire of Sang to heal his wife, as he has healed many others; but the doubt in her mind baffles him, and for a long time he is unsuccessful. At last, however, he resolves to make a mighty effort—to besiege the Lord with prayer, to wrestle with him, as Jacob did of old, and not to release him until his petition is granted. While he lies thus before the altar calling upon the Lord in sacred rapture, a tremendous

avalanche sweeps down the mountain side, but divides, leaving the church and parsonage unharmed. The rumor of this new wonder spreads like fire in withered grass, and, among thousands of others, a number of clergymen, with their bishop, on the way to a convention, stop to convince themselves of the authenticity of the miracle. Then follows a long discussion regarding the value of miracles, some maintaining that the church has outgrown the need of them, others that they are indispensable—that Christianity cannot survive without them. For, has not Christ promised that “even greater things than these shall ye do?” Is not this the faith that verily can say to the mountain, “Rise up and cast thyself into the sea?”

Another miracle, hardly less marvellous, is that Clara, who has slept for the first time in a month, now rises from her bed and goes forth to meet her husband, falling upon his neck amid the ringing of church bells and the hallelujahs of the assembled multitudes. But when he tries to raise her, she is dead, and overwhelmed by his emotion, the clergyman falls dead at her side.

Love and Geography.

Beyond Their Strength is so obviously a closet-drama that we can hardly imagine it under the illumination of the footlights, and no Scandinavian theatre cared to risk the experiment. Yet it was produced at Paris in July, 1894. In his next play, *Love and Geography*, Björnson repeated his early triumphs, changing from the scientific seriousness of *Beyond their Strength* to the

opposite extreme of light comedy. Not that his new play was without a Björnsonian moral, but it was jocosely enforced in scenes of great vivacity and strong theatrical effect. The author himself is here the subject of satire. The unconscious tyranny of a man who has a mission, a life-work, is delightfully illustrated in the person of the geographer, Professor Tygeson, to whom Björnson, when he played the part at the Christiania theatre, had the boldness to give his father's mask. The professor is engaged upon a great geographical work, and gradually takes possession of the whole house with his maps, globes and books, driving his wife from the parlor and his daughter to boarding-school. So absorbed is he in his task that he can talk and think of nothing else. He neglects all social duties from sheer abstraction and becomes almost a boor, because all the world, outside of his book, pales into insignificance. The inevitable consequence follows. Tygeson alienates all who come in contact with him. He is on the point of losing the affection of his wife, and his daughter comes near going astray for want of paternal supervision. Both of these calamities are, however, averted, though in a highly eccentric manner.

It was not by his plays only that Björnson sought to lead the people of Norway into new ways of thinking. As he had won his earliest popularity by simple stories of peasant life, he tried to present his liberal views of religion and education in novels which somewhat resemble *Robert Elsmere* and kindred works. His *Flags are Flying* (1884) shows the influence of heredity on the life of a family, and the possibility of redeeming a

degenerate stock by introducing a healthy strain and a scientific system of education. Another ambitious novel, *In God's Way* (1889), inculcated sweetness and righteousness as the true aim of religion rather than Pharisaical observance of church ordinances. Throughout his life-work Björnson has preserved a genial optimism, in marked contrast with his compatriot Ibsen's pessimism.

New Tales.

Björnson devoted the remainder of his life to writing novels, in which he attacks some of the problems of the day, with no less vigor than is shown in his dramas. In his last important work, *New Tales*, published in 1894, his tendency to vehemence is by no means abated, and, as in other of his works, there is a grateful contrast to the conventional fiction of the age. Here is a man who has resolutely roused himself from the spell of Romanticism, has cleared his eyes of the film of dreams, and with a sharp, wide-awake intensity focussed them to the real aspect of the actual world. He has sat down with his windows wide open, and allowed the sounds and sights of reality to pour in upon him, and he possesses the magic power to gauge the significance of the phenomena and divine the causes which lurk behind them.

Comparison With Ibsen.

In these qualities Björnson only shows himself an advanced type of his countrymen. What distinguishes

the Norsemen above all other nations is their unfailing self-reliance and force of individuality. The old Norse sagas abound in illustrations of this untamable vigor and self-assertion. It was, indeed, the looseness of the social structure resulting from this sense of independence, and the consequent jealousy and internecine warfare, which destroyed the Icelandic republic and made Norway a province of Denmark. In all the great men of Norway we recognize something of the strong individualism of their Viking forefathers. Ibsen is the apostle par excellence of philosophic anarchism; Björnson has his full share of the national aggressiveness and pugnacity. Yet there is a radical difference between them. The sense of social obligation which Ibsen lacks, Björnson possesses in a high degree. He fights, not as a guerilla, but as the spokesman and leader of thousands. He is the chieftain who looms a head above all the people. He wields a heavy sword and he deals mighty blows; but the wrath that possesses him is born of love. When he fights man, it is in the name of humanity; it is not for himself that he demands larger liberties, securer rights, more humanizing conditions of life. The many, the small and down-trodden, the dumb millions, whom Ibsen despises, Björnson loves.

It is singular that Ibsen's name is far more familiar to English-speaking people than Björnson's, whose ideas would appear more acceptable than Ibsen's pessimism.

Says one of the foremost of Danish critics, comparing the two Norse writers: "Ibsen is a judge, stern as the old judges of Israel; Björnson is a prophet, the hope-

ful herald of the better day. Ibsen is a great revolutionist. In the *Comedy of Love*, *A Doll's House*, and *Ghosts*, he scourges marriage; in *Brand*, the state church; in the *Pillars of Society*, the dominant bourgeoisie. Whatever he attacks is shivered into splinters by his profound and superior criticism; only the shattered ruins remain, and we are unable to discern the new social institutions beyond them. Björnson is a conciliatory spirit, who wages war without bitterness. April sunshine glints and gleams through all his works, while those of Ibsen, with their sombre seriousness, lie in deep shadow. Ibsen loves the idea—the logical and psychological consistency which drives Brand out of the church and Nora out of the marital relation. To Ibsen's love of the idea corresponds Björnson's love of man."

Kielland.

Foremost among the contemporaries of Björnson was Alexander Kielland, of whom we first hear as the orator of the day at a baccalaureate celebration of students at the university of Christiania in 1867. "That young man will be heard from one of these days," was the universal verdict of those who listened to his clear-cut and finished sentences and noted the maturity of his opinions. But ten years passed away and Kielland was not heard from, outside of his native town of Stavanger, where, after studying law and spending some time in France, he married and settled down as a provincial dignitary, as his fathers had been before him. At

length, however, when his friends had begun to say of him, not that he would do, but that he might have done, great things. there appeared, in 1879, a modest volume of *Novelettes*, bearing his name. It was but a slender piece of workmanship, yet it possessed a style which made its mark. No man had ever written the Norwegian language as Kielland wrote it. There was a lightness of touch, a perspicacity, an epigrammatic sparkle, with occasional flashes of wit, all foreign to Norwegian writers. These qualities he had derived from the French, and especially from Daudet, whom he closely resembles in delicacy of touch and felicity of phrase.

Though of patrician birth and training, Kielland reveals in his writings a strong sympathy with the toiling masses; but his democracy belongs rather to the brain than to the heart. It is, indeed, difficult to reconcile with the tone of his works the fastidious and distingué personality of their author. He may love the people at a distance, may talk prettily about the sturdy son of the soil, who is the core and marrow of the nation; but he dislikes to come in contact with him, or if he does, it is with a handkerchief to his nose. In all this, however, he is no worse than the wealthy friends of democracy in other lands, who, while professing to exalt the dignity of labor, have, at heart, the profoundest contempt for the masses, and exclaim, with Horace, "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.*"

In the *Laboring People*, one of Kielland's productions, the subject is the corrupting influence of the upper upon the lower classes, and here are presented

some appalling studies in the pathology and psychology of vice. This was followed by *Skipper Worse*, which was a social study rather than a social satire, with a concise and well-constructed story, full of admirable scenes and portraits. Its theme, like that of Daudet's *L'Évangéliste*, is the pietistic movement, and the drama set in motion is more pathetic, the characters are more humanly interesting than in the Frenchman's description. Two superb figures, the lay preacher, Hans Nilsen and Skipper Worse, surpass all that the author had before attempted. Especially is the marriage of that profane but delightful old sea-dog, Jacob Worse, to the pious Sara Torvestad, and the attempts of his mother-in-law to convert him, described not merely with the drollery which the subject invites, but with a delicate humor which is on the verge of pathos.

Elsie, a Christmas tale, is an almost perfect little classic, describing with exquisite art the life of a small Norwegian coast-town in all its vivid details. While Björnson, in *The Heritage of Kurts*, emphasizes the responsibility of the individual to society, Kielland prefers to lay emphasis on the responsibility of society to the individual. The former selects a hero with vicious inherited tendencies, redeemed by wise education and favorable environment; the latter portrays a heroine with no corrupt predisposition, destroyed by a corrupting environment. Elsie could not be good, because the world was so constituted that girls of her kind were not expected to be good. Temptations, perpetually thronging in her way, broke down the moral bulwarks of her nature; resistance seemed in

vain; yet no one has the heart to condemn her. Extremely clever is the satire on the benevolent societies whose real object is to furnish an officious sense of virtue to their aristocratic members. "The Society for the Redemption of the Abandoned Women of St. Peter's Parish" is presided over by a gentleman who is responsible for the abandoned condition of a goodly number of these women; but it appears, or, is made to appear, that they belong to another parish. St. Peter's is aristocratic, exclusive, and keeps its wickedness discreetly veiled. The horror of the secretary of the society, when she hears that an "abandoned woman," who calls upon her for aid, has a child without being married, is described in terms that are at once pathetic and comic, while all the scenes are instinct with life and admirably characteristic.

Kielland's *Professor* is a drama of considerable merit and of the usual proportions; he is also the author of several short comedies; but none of them won more than a patronizing mention. Perseverance would doubtless have won for him more favorable recognition; for his novels show that he possessed all the qualifications for a successful dramatist. But he turned again to fiction, his later works including *Poison*, *Fortuna*, *Snow*, *St. John's Eve*, and *Jacob. Snow*, which was published in 1886, is intended to be symbolic of a country wrapped, as was Norway, in the wintry winding-sheet of a tyrannical orthodoxy. *Jacob* was stamped by the orthodox as an immoral story, and so it doubtless seemed to those who are incapable of receiving the truths which it conveys. The author belongs, not to

the large class of writers whose only aim is success, but to those who would aid the thinking portion of humanity in adjusting themselves and their fellow-men to the altered conditions of the world. This may be a thankless task, but it is a noble one, and among those who are engaged in it a foremost rank belongs to Alexander Kielland.



VIII.

Ibsen.

The most conspicuous name in Norwegian literature is that of Henrik Ibsen, whose fame has been won entirely in the drama, though he is also the author of many lyric poems of exquisite beauty. His first dramas were of the historical-romantic order, and while these are not remarkable, and cannot be compared with the grand pictures contained in later works, they must be regarded as preliminary studies, and, as such, give earnest of the genius which he afterward displayed. With the single exception of Shakespeare, no writer has exercised so wide an influence on the drama of the civilized world; for in many foreign countries, and especially in England and the United States, he is more honored than in his native land. Yet none have been more freely criticised; for in dealing with the social questions of the day, in laying bare the sores of modern social life, for which his genius is eminently fitted, his chief aim is the reform of abuses, and the path of the reformer is hard. It is chiefly upon his own times and his own country that he pours out the vials of his satire and indignation, putting hollowness

and falsehood in the pillory with a display of anger which, by its very vehemence, often injures the poetical effect. No wonder that he made many enemies, and that even to his warmest admirers his severity seemed excessive. One of his latest comedies, *An Enemy to the People*, is a humorous apology for the keenness of his satire, and this was written in the voluntary exile into which the author retired in 1864. He did not return until 1891, when he made his home in Christiania, and became the pride of the people whom he had scourged; for unto genius much is forgiven, and especially to one who has added a fresh wreath to his nation's laurels.

Ibsen's Mission.

In reading the social dramas of Ibsen, we are apt to be seized with a kind of despair. The more radically we think of the problems of human existence, the more deeply we seek to penetrate them, the more insoluble they seem to become. It may, indeed, be said that any final solution, even if possible, would not be desirable. Humanity would stagnate, grow torpid and indolent, and its evolution would be arrested, if each new generation were not confronted with urgent questions, both abstract and concrete, clamoring for solution. There is, however, no danger of our incurring degeneration and decay by guessing, once for all, the riddle of the Sphinx, and witnessing its plunge into the abysmal void. It is an evidence of our spiritual vitality that we have no lack of problems, and cannot cease from persistent, though discouraging, attempts to

grapple with them. Our fathers, who troubled themselves little about these things, found life proportionately easier; but they were in the same proportion inferior to their descendants; and doubtless the twentieth century will multiply further the crop of enigmas, and look upon the nineteenth with something of that supercilious benevolence with which we regard its predecessor.

The spirit that questions accepted truisms, that reveals pitfalls where we fancied ourselves safe, and feels the storm in advance, in spite of official fair-weather signals, urges its possessor to a thankless but by no means unprofitable task. This is Ibsen's peculiar mission. To him, more than to any other writer, belongs the wholesomely stimulating "spirit that denies," and well it is that such a spirit has lived among us; for, as the Lord says in the prologue to *Faust*,

Man's activity is all too prone to slacken.
He soon will love an absolute repose.
Therefore I willingly give him a comrade
Who goads and works and must create—as devil.

Here, let it be understood, is not intended any comparison between Ibsen and Mephistopheles, in the creative capacity which Goethe attributes to the latter. With the animus of Mephisto's denials he has probably no affinity, though there are passages—as where he declares his willingness "to place 'neath the ark the torpedo most cheerfully"—which hint at a closer relation to Faust's sneering companion than anyone would

venture directly to charge. We may detect in Ibsen a certain cynical satisfaction in discovering the worm in the apple, the flaw in the diamond, the rift in the lute. This satisfaction is, perhaps, an inevitable concomitant of the excellence of his work, and is not very difficult to explain.

Pessimism.

Our main grievance against Ibsen is not that he lacks pleasure in life's outward pageant, but that we can detect no dominant spirit underlying his criticisms of life. He seems to be in ill-humor with humanity and the plan of creation in general—if, indeed, he recognizes such a plan—and he devotes himself with ruthless satisfaction to showing what a paltry, contemptible lot men are, and how aimless, futile, and irrational their existence is on earth, with its chaotic strivings and bewildered endeavors. There is hardly a glimpse anywhere of Goethe's conviction that

A good man, through obscurest aspiration,
Has still an instinct of the one true way.

For all that, Ibsen has, according to his own statement, an abiding faith in evolution, though he is apparently out of all patience with its lagging and erratic snail-pace. In a speech which he made at a banquet, given in his honor in Stockholm, he uttered the following significant remarks: "I believe that the scientific doctrine of evolution is applicable also in the domain of intellectual life. I believe that a time is soon to

come when the political idea and the social idea will cease to exist under their present forms, and that from the two a unity will rise which will contain the conditions of human happiness. I believe that poetry, philosophy and religion will merge themselves into a new category—a new vital power—of which we, at the moment at which we are living, cannot form a very distinct idea. I have been told on many occasions that I am a pessimist. Well, so I am, in the sense that I do not believe in the eternity of human ideals. But I am likewise an optimist, in the sense that I believe in the possibility of transmuting and developing these ideals. To speak more plainly, I believe that the ideals of our age, in disappearing, have a tendency to what in my drama, *Emperor and Galilean*, I have designated under the name 'The Third Empire.'

It would appear from this that it is the radicalism of Ibsen's optimism which makes him a pessimist. He is not content to wait for "The Third Empire," even though he believes that it is close at hand.

Ibsen and Shelley.

Widely remote as Ibsen is from Shelley, he is not entirely free from what has been called the latter's "millennial discontent." The hints which we derive as to the man of "The Third Empire" and his condition, remind one vaguely of *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*. Only Shelley's anarchism has a rosy suffusion of hope, which Ibsen, in spite of his assertion to the contrary, seems to lack. Ibsen appears

to most readers as philosophically unsound as was Shelley. He had no more conception of the value of the restraining agencies with which man, as a mere measure of self-preservation, has been obliged to hedge himself in. He has the same titanic impatience with Philistine morality. He undervalues what we call civilization, which he regards primarily as an ignominious compromise—a surrender and curtailment of our natural rights and liberties, in return for a paltry security for life and limb.

The case may be somewhat overstated; but who can read *An Enemy of the People*, with its emphatic declaration that "the strongest man is he who stands alone," without deriving the impression that Ibsen is more alive to the drawbacks of civilization than to its advantages? He repudiates the "contract social" and all obligations which involve detriment to the individual character. The most precious result, to him, of this confused turmoil, which he calls life, is the eminent, the powerful personality; and because he believes that civilization is not conducive to its development, but rather to its repression, he condemns civilization. He has apparently no appreciation of the struggle, the immense suffering, the deluge of blood and tears, which it has cost to redeem the world from that predatory liberty which he admires, and to build up gradually the safeguards of organized society which he detests. That unrestrained individualism which Ibsen, by inference, celebrates, had a magnificent trial in Iceland during the Sturlunge period, and it ended, as might have been expected, in anarchy and exhaustion. The great pred-

atory men, whose strength of will was, indeed, unquestioned, ended by destroying each other. The freedom of the one in such a state of society means, as Ibsen is well aware, the thralldom of thousands, but in his sublime self-confidence he overlooks the too probable result of the inevitable conflict of the giants, if the giants indeed should survive the indiscriminate slaughter.

This, it may be said, is the plan which nature has adopted throughout her kingdom, and it is beneficent in securing the survival of the strong. Yes, if by strength is meant brute force,—successful self-assertion—it undoubtedly insures its survival. There was a time, frequently called the heroic age, when such survival was conducive to the highest ultimate good; but all historians and most philosophers agree that this time is past. It is now intellectual vigor, rather than physical prowess—it is brain, rather than brawn—which insures survival and dominance. Of course, the intellectual hero of to-day is no more an ultimate type which nature will cherish and perpetuate, than the muscular hero of the tenth century; but it is the type which, in the present transition, she most needs, and which now best subserves her purpose. Whether there is, as Matthew Arnold assumed, any purpose in creation which “makes for righteousness,” need not here be discussed; but that there is a perceptible development toward higher and more complex forms of life and of social organization, no man who is not willfully blind can pretend to deny. That this organization, at its present stage of complexity, involves inconvenience and curtailment of happiness to many, may be readily

admitted, but that its relaxation or abolition would involve a thousandfold more misery to a thousand times as many, seems to be equally self-evident.

Defense of Despotism.

Ibsen, if we read him aright, would calmly accept the latter chance, feeling confident that he himself would be among those few who, by dint of inborn strength, would know how to assert themselves, and who would reap more advantages than they would incur peril from the removal of legal restraints. When, on one occasion, he was discussing Russian conditions with Doctor Brandes, and praising the czar's empire on account of "all the brilliant oppression there," his interlocutor expressed his astonishment. "Only think," said Ibsen, "of all the glorious love of liberty which it produces. Russia is one of the few countries of earth where men still love liberty and make sacrifices for her. For this reason the country stands so high, both in poetry and art."

"If all these good things result from oppression," Brandes replied, "then, of course, we ought to praise it. But the knout—do you include that, too, in your enthusiasm. Suppose, now, that you were a Russian, and that your little boy was to be knouted."

Ibsen sat silent for a moment, with an impenetrable air. Then he answered, laughing: "Be knouted—he should not; but knout, that he should."

In spite of the laugh, this was, probably, Ibsen's real conviction. There was, in fact, no other escape

from so untenable a position; but it is perfectly in keeping with his undisguised partisanship for the knouters, in all departments of life, and his utter contempt for the knouted. Carlyle would have made a similar answer, if similarly questioned, and did, in fact, when pressed by Tourguéneff, seek refuge in the same paradox.

There is an apparent contradiction in Ibsen's admiration of despotism and his desire to abolish the state with all its restraining agencies. He loves despotism, however, not as an ultimate condition, but as an indispensable transitional stage in the education of the races. It is part of what is the only positive element of his philosophy; that is, the wholesome discipline of sorrow, the educative power of suffering. There is hardly a single one of his maturer plays in which this lesson is not more or less indirectly enforced. But even with this reservation, his anarchism seems precipitate, if not illogical.

It is, of course, a perfectly rational assumption, justified by the ethical development of the race, that humanity will, some time in the remote future, be able to dispense with the state. As in the course of ages, that inherited remnant of the world's past barbarism which men call evil is gradually eliminated from our souls, the laws which society in self-defense framed against the evil-doer will become superfluous and lapse into desuetude. It is the beast of prey which yet lingers in many of us that makes locks and safes and iron gratings a necessity; when the beast of prey is extinct, as surely some day it will be, the locks and

safes and gratings will become extinct also. If there were no robbers, thieves, and murderers, the police would be a superfluous luxury, and would soon be abolished; and they are not the only restraining agency necessitated by the barbaric remnant, which the happier centuries to come will rejoice in renouncing.

Ibsen on the Commune.

Ibsen even goes further in a letter to Doctor Brandes on the subject of the Paris Commune of 1871. He there expresses an acute disappointment at the failure of these ferocious enthusiasts to establish a free and orderly government. He would apparently abolish the cage before the tiger is dead; and expect the beast, in grateful recognition of the trust that is reposed in him, to curb its predatory instincts and behave with the gentleness of a lapdog. The same naïve expectation was expressed by Shelley, "the cardinal doctrine of whose faith it was," according to his wife's testimony, "that if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity and equal rights, this earth would be a paradise." Yes, if they could be so induced; but that is a colossal "if," showing a lamentable ignorance of the human heart, with all its dusky recesses. Shelley was a disciple of Rousseau, and might be pardoned his millennial faith; but Ibsen, who is a contemporary of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall, has less excuse for spreading so mischievous a doctrine. When he cites the Jews as an instance of high individual development, which is directly due to "their

not having any state to drag along with them," he seems to forget that the Jews have benefited by the state devised and developed by others—not, however, without bearing their share of its burdens. Though they have had no political organization of their own, they have surely not withdrawn from their civic obligations; still less have they lived in the ideal anarchic state which dispenses with those ten police regulations called the Decalogue. They seem, therefore, ill qualified to establish the claim which Ibsen makes in their favor.

What gives Ibsen his world-wide prominence among the intellectual leaders of his time is his ability to discern the actual tendency of society, and his daring courage in so stating his discoveries as to compel attention and acknowledgment that he is right in his diagnosis, if not in suggestion of remedy for the evils pointed out. His fame has grown steadily since he first claimed the right to deliver to his fellow-men a revelation of their own condition.

Sketch of Career.

Henrik Ibsen is a cosmopolitan spirit, betraying only the faintest perceptible trace of the limitations of nationality. As a matter of fact, his ancestry is so complicated that nothing but the locality of birth properly consigns him to Norway. His blood presents a mixture of Scotch, Danish and German strains, into which no purely Norwegian element seems to have entered. He was born March 20, 1828, in the little town

of Skien, the chief industry of which is the sawing and exporting of lumber. Henrik Ibsen's grandfather was a ship's captain, who was lost at sea; and his father, a merchant, once prosperous, but when his son was in his eighth year, became a bankrupt. Henrik was a shy and silent lad, who found no pleasure in the rough sport of boys, and, therefore, was not popular among them. The jail, the pillory on the market-place, and the mad-house were his playgrounds, or these most potently stirred his imagination. In his sixteenth year, after having received a scanty education, he was sent to the little shipping town of Grimstad, as apprentice to an apothecary. Here he spent five years in dreamy discontent. Like John Keats, similarly situated at Edmonton, he took to writing verses, and permitted his thoughts to soar considerably above his gallipots. The young ladies of Grimstad did not in the least interest him, and he was to them a walking enigma. He cared for nothing that the ordinary young man in his position cares for. In the first place, he was not in the least convivial. He despised the vapid small-talk and gossip of the afternoon coffee or tea; he had no taste for whist, boston or hot toddy, and he could not dance. All the jovial poking of fun and humorous anecdotes of the returned skippers he listened to without the ghost of a smile. No wonder he was unpopular. A young chemist's apprentice, with a rebellious head of hair and lips that shut like a vise, who drew caricatures of the leading citizens, and made epigrams on people who had been kind to him, was not the style of man whom the Grimstad sea-captains would find congenial.

Henrik soon found himself on a war-footing with the worthy Philistines of Grimstad.

Catiline.

Schiller founded an immortal tragedy on the story of his rebellion against the military discipline of the Ducal academy in Stuttgart. Ibsen, in his confinement in the Grimstad apothecary's shop, found a still more daring symbol for his smoldering rebellion. He wrote in these days the tragedy of *Catiline*, the hero of which was the Roman conspirator whom Cicero had so eloquently maligned. He had kept a kind of historic outlook from his gallipots and followed European events with an ardent interest. The Hungarian uprising of 1848 and 1849 aroused all his revolutionary enthusiasm, and the Polish rebellion of 1846 had enlisted his most fervent sympathy. These great events had stirred his mind deeply, and produced a responsive vibration which lingered long, and refused to be allayed until, in some way, the electrical fluid was discharged. His tragedy served the purpose, affording an outlet for the indignation which, during these years, had accumulated within him. The world was out of gear; liberty was crushed by tyranny; justice was fiction; and outrage and wrong triumphed on every side. Such a world was scarcely worth saving; it deserved to be destroyed.

This, too, is the reasoning of *Catiline* in regard to the world empire of Rome. It is hopelessly corrupt, rotten to the core. *Catiline*, being unable to redeem it, resolves to destroy it. The position of the hero between

Aurelia and Furia, one of whom is his good and the other his evil genius, foreshadows a situation which recurs in the *Warriors of Belgenland*, *Brand* and other plays. Aurelia, his wife, is a loving, self-sacrificing, dutiful woman, who lives only in the man she loves; while Furia, his mistress, is ambitious, imperious and unscrupulous, but of a lofty daring which commands admiration. While Aurelia restrains Catiline, imploring him to rest content with his lot and her love, Furia incites him to action, and if need be, to crime; and though loving him, hurries him on to destruction. Her nature is a complex one, and would require a maturer poet than Ibsen then was to do justice to her tangled motives. We learn that she is cherishing a murky melodramatic plot of vengeance upon her lover, who has betrayed her sister Silvia. All this smacks of the cheapest kind of melodrama, and is the sort of thing which in the twentieth century can only be pardoned on the plea of youth.

It is not to be wondered at that *Catiline* is in many respects a crude production; but rather that it contains so much which is informed with significance and is typical of the poet's maturer period. He must have felt during the composition of his tragedy the insufficiency of his education, and this he determined to correct. At the age of twenty-two he entered Heltberg's "student factory," in Christiania, in order to prepare himself in the shortest possible time for the university. Among his schoolmates were Björnson, the novelist Jonas Lie, and that extraordinary character, Aasmund Olafson Vinje, known in literature as "the peasant."

Björnson has left us a verse commemorative of this remarkable company:

Long and lank, half dozing in the outermost row,
Sat Aasmund Olafson Vinje, and pondered, I trow.
Overstrained and lean, of the color of gypsum,
Behind a beard, huge and coal-black, was seen Henrik Ibsen.

After an incredible short preparation Ibsen presented himself for entrance to the university, and managed, with difficulty, to scrape through the examinations. In the meanwhile he had submitted *Catiline* to the manager of the Christiania theatre, and much to his chagrin had failed to secure its acceptance. A generous friend, a law student, volunteered, however, to publish the tragedy at his own expense, being sanguine that people would recognize its merits as cordially as he did himself. But the public failed to respond; only thirty copies found bona fide purchasers, while the remainder of the edition was disposed of to a huckster.

The Warrior's Tomb.

A second play, *The Warrior's Tomb*, was accepted by the Christiania theatre and was performed. It was of the usual Romantic type, and full of reminiscences of Oehlenschläger; but for all that, or rather in consequence of its conventional coloring, it attracted some little attention and procured Ibsen a call as "theatre poet" and later as manager of the newly established Norwegian theatre in Bergen. Thither he removed in November, 1851, and two years later produced another

highly romantic play, entitled *St. John's Night*, full of fairy lore and echoes of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. A work of much greater significance is the three-act musical tragedy *Norma, or a Politician's Love*, which was never published in book form. According to the account of it given by Henrik Jaeger, it scourged the spirit of compromise in Norwegian politics, and exhibited in the germ some of the ideas which have blossomed in Ibsen's maturer satires.

Mistress Inger.

A still further advance is marked by the tragedy *Mistress Inger of Oestraat*, which presents an interesting and genuinely tragic problem. *Mistress Inger* was the wealthiest woman in Norway in the sixteenth century, and a commanding historical figure in that period of national degradation. Ibsen had no doubt idealized her in making her the mouthpiece of a patriotic indignation which can hardly be proved to have existed; but whether historically correct or not, *Mistress Inger* is, dramatically considered, extremely effective. She has sworn on the bier of the murdered patriot, Knut Alfsson, to avenge his death; the peasants, groaning under the Danish yoke, look to her to furnish them with arms and head the revolt against their oppressors; but her position as the mother-in-law of one Danish nobleman, Nils Lykke, and the widow of another, arouses suspicion as to the singleness of her motives. Before her marriage she had been loved by the Swedish chancellor Sten Sture, and had borne him a son who had

been brought up in his father's country. This son, whom though unknown, she deeply loves, becomes her fate. There are two factions in Norway: one Danish, which employs its power for extortion and oppression; and one Swedish, which, through intrigues with Sture, endeavors to effect an entente-cordiale with Sweden, and the proclamation of Sture's legitimate son as the king of Norway. But Mistress Inger, who dexterously plays under cover with both parties, conceives the idea of placing her own son upon the throne. She becomes unfaithful to her patriotic purpose, and her constant fear of harming her son, or placing obstacles in his way, ties her hands and makes her act with cautious hesitation where prompt decision is needed. When finally her son appears upon the scene she mistakes him for the chancellor's legitimate son and has him murdered. A ring which she finds upon his body convinces her of the error, and she sinks unconscious upon his coffin.

The Feast of Solhaug.

In Ibsen's next play, *The Feast of Solhaug*, his Romanticism culminates and produces a curious hybrid—half lyrical opera and half melodrama. It is written in verse, interspersed with songs, and is about as little characteristic of Ibsen as *Lalla Rookh* would have been of Wordsworth, or *Don Juan* of Tennyson. His inspiration is now drawn from the Norwegian folk-songs and heroic ballads, a fine collection of which was published in 1853. There were those, however, who maintained that he had borrowed largely from the Danish

poet, Henrik Hertz, whose lurid tragedy, *Svend Dyring's House*, had appeared a few years before and was enjoying exceptional popularity. Ibsen himself, in his preface to the second edition, repelled this insinuation, and in order to give the public a chance of judging, put Hertz's play on the boards a month after the performance of his own.

Olaf Liljekrans.

The Feast of Solhaug was the first of Ibsen's plays which achieved decided success on the stage. It drew crowded houses, and all the ambitious scenes were greeted with prolonged applause. After six performances in Bergen it migrated to the larger stages of Christiania, Copenhagen and Stockholm. *Olaf Liljekrans*, which followed close on its heels, is in the nature of an encore, though its germinal idea had existed for years in the author's mind, and had, in a fragmentary form, been committed to writing. The material is borrowed partly from a Norwegian legend of the Ptarmigan of Justedal—the nickname of a girl who was the only survivor after the Black Death—and partly from the ballad of Olaf Liljekrans, who, on his wedding day, meets the elf-maidens in the forest and is slain by them because he will not tread the dance and be unfaithful to his beloved. Ibsen, however, dispenses with the elf-maidens and substitutes Alfhild, the Ptarmigan, who is a child of nature, utterly ignorant of the usages of civilization; and Olaf, instead of proving superior to her blandishments, succumbs and leaves his bride in

the lurch. He is apparently bewitched, and forgets everything except the alluring loveliness of his unconventional companion. Being recalled, however, by his mother to a sense of his obligations, he deserts Alfild, who, in revenge, sets fire to his house and burns it to the ground. She is seized, condemned to death, and about to be executed unless "some man of spotless fame shall step forward, declare her innocent and proclaim himself willing to marry her." Olaf, whose bride in the meanwhile has eloped with another man, offers himself as her champion, and Mistress Kirsten, his mother, having ascertained that "the Ptarmigan" is heir to the whole uninhabited valley, withdraws her objections and gives her blessings to their union.

Olaf Liljekrans is chiefly interesting as marking a period of transition in Ibsen's art. Life begins to intrude upon him, and the discrepancy between the rotund magniloquence which tradition has prescribed for the stage and the accent of reality disturbs him, and makes him vacillate, according to his mood, between the one and the other. Some years were yet to elapse before he definitely broke with the Romantic tradition.

In 1857 Ibsen severed his connection with the Bergen theatre and returned to Christiania. This year became significant to Norwegian literature through the publication of Björnson's romance, *Synnöve Solbakken*, which may be said to have revealed the Norwegian nationality to itself. Here was, indeed, the national physiognomy, clear and distinct, though perhaps a trifle flattered. Henceforth Norway was no longer to walk in the leading strings of Denmark. Björnson's style

was wholly new in literature, and its nervous strength and laconic pithiness were felt to be admirably expressive of the calm, rugged and taciturn race which it undertook to describe.

The Warriors of Helgeland.

At the very same time as Björnson, Ibsen was attracted to the old saga literature, in which the Norse nationality, eight or nine centuries before, had found its monumental expression. Björnson had written, but not published, the remarkable dramatic fragment, *Between the Battles*, in which he had adopted the style of the sagas themselves, and attained a degree of concentration and condensed brevity in the dialogue which was declared to be but one step removed from pantomime. Ibsen struck simultaneously the same path in his drama, *The Warriors of Helgeland*, which is little more than a potpourri of themes taken from different sagas. The *Volsunga* furnished the main plot, *Egil's Saga* one of the chief incidents, the *Laxdöla* an effective sub-motive, and the *Njála* some striking pieces of dialogue. Those who have read these sagas, however, will not relish the modification and remolding to which Ibsen has subjected them. The heroine, Hjordis, has none of the nobility of soul, but all the ferocity of her prototype, Brynhild, in the *Edda*. She appeals to no modern sentiment; and the demoniac grandeur of her speech, which might well befit a valkyrie, is simply repellent and unnatural in a mortal woman. Not a glimpse is there in Hjordis of the joyous and loving

womanhood which is so beautifully revealed in the scene of the Edda, where Sigurd awakens Brynhild, and they burst into a pæan of praise of the sun and the moon and all earthly and heavenly things. Hjordis is fierce, gloomy and terrible, from the beginning of the drama to its end, inciting men to discord by the diabolical cunning of her words and revelling in bloodshed and murder. It is true that the sagas depict the women at that age as being often more ferocious than the men; but it is the valkyrie, Brynhild, who haunts Ibsen's fancy and makes him desire to invest his earthly heroine with superhuman attributes which are incompatible with her character as a mortal.

The plot is, with some essential modifications, that of the second half of the *Volsunga*, with many of its supernatural elements left out. Sigurd has loved and dishonored Hjordis, and wedded Dagny; Hjordis avenges herself and slays him, not by proxy, but by her own hand. A highly melodramatic scene concludes the drama. The diabolical rout, called "The Wild Chase," rushes through the air on foaming black horses; and Egil, the son of Hjordis, discovers his mother riding with furious exultation amid these dusky phantoms. The drapa, or dirge, of the chieftain Oernulf over his slain son is very beautiful, but is obviously modelled on *The Loss of the Son* in *Egil's Saga*.

The Pretenders.

In 1858 Ibsen married a daughter of the well-known authoress, Magdalene Thoresen, and became the man-

ager of the opposition stage, known as the Norwegian theatre. He had also commenced the writing of a new saga drama, *The Pretenders*, but left it for some years unfinished, while devoting himself to a modern theme which had more attractions. This was *Love's Comedy*, his first satirical play, of which a later description will be given.

The Pretenders reflects the struggle between the two tendencies which were striving for supremacy in the author's mind. There can be no doubt that the national zeal which impelled him to the treatment of old Norse historical themes was already on the wane, while the problems of modern society were attracting him with increasing power. Moreover, his vision of life was changing. The romantic self-delusion, which is common to youth, was giving way to a clearer and more mature conception. What were the actual experiences which had disillusioned him is left to our conjecture; but the fact remains that he was disillusioned. Under these circumstances, it is obvious that the stilted poetic style which he had formerly employed could no longer satisfy him. He felt keenly in reading the inflated saga tragedies of Oehlenschläger that there the accent of truth was wholly lacking; and the perception grew upon him that the artificial movement of verse was hostile to the highest realistic effect. *The Pretenders*, like the *Feast of Solhaug*, is therefore written in prose, with but few metrical passages.

As an acting drama, *The Pretenders* has always proved highly impressive; for it is written from beginning to end with the true dramatic instinct which

concentrates the action, never allowing the interest to flag, and dispenses with all superfluous dialogue. Ibsen's familiarity with the stage, as manager and artistic director, had taught him the conditions of practical success, and the clear and orderly exposition of the dramatic problem in his later plays is largely due to this experience. But for all that, he could acquire no confidence in himself. The scene in *The Pretenders* between Skule and the Icelandic Scald Jatgeir has been frequently quoted as applying to the author:

King Skule.—To be a king, what gift is needful for me?

Jatgeir.—Not that of doubt; thou wouldst not question thus.

King Skule.—What gift is needful?

Jatgeir.—

Lord, thou art king.

King Skule.—Art thou at all times sure thou art a poet?

Lack of Interest.

It is one of the misfortunes of a small State that it lacks courage to recognize its great men. Ibsen had now demonstrated his right to the title of poet; but fame and honor were slow in finding him out. Christianity was but an overgrown village, a hot-bed of slander and scandalous gossip, and its intellectual life was incredibly meagre.

The Norwegians are, and have always been, hot partisans, and they are for that very reason incapacitated for the cool, unbiased impartiality which is required for deciding questions of literary merit. Björnson had his partisans, who felt in duty bound to pull down Ibsen; and Ibsen, too, had his, though they were far less

numerous, who pronounced Björnson stilted, affected and too furiously national. There is no evidence at hand that either of the two poets encouraged this derogation of the other, but each was powerless to cool the zeal of his adherents.

It is not to be wondered at that Ibsen grew weary and heart-sick of this petty, narrow-minded and unprofitable strife. That mere cockpit interest in literature, as to which will win, is not stimulating to its object, but rather degrading. Ibsen, in the extreme discomfort of uncongenial surroundings, felt as if he was threatened with a complete torpidity of his imagination—a complete paralysis of all intellectual energy. In his desperate strait he applied to the government for a travelling stipend, which happily was granted. But the university faculty, to which the matter was referred, recommended that the amount be cut down to one-half of what the poet expected. Ibsen then appealed personally to the minister of education and ecclesiastical affairs, who, after having listened to his plea, assumed the responsibility of granting him the entire sum.

Discontent.

No Norwegian who has not lived in other countries can comprehend or sympathize with the keen distress of Ibsen during these last years of his sojourn in the land of his birth. That Norway, the most favored portion of the earth, should not be good enough for him, is a sentiment which is fiercely resented by his compatriots. There must be something radically wrong,

they say, with the man who cannot find contentment among the most excellent and cultivated people who constitute what is called society in the Norse capital. There is, however, no arguing with these good folk; and let us hear Ibsen himself state his grievance against them. That remarkable poem, entitled *The Power of Memory*, refers obviously to these dark years when he seemed to be "standing on the brink of his own grave," gazing shudderingly into it.

Have you ever heard how a bear-tamer's pet
Is taught to dance so he'll never forget?

Into a big caldron the bear is invited;
And under the caldron a fire is lighted.

A wheezy hand-organ the sentiment voices:
"Rejoice in life," and the bear rejoices.

With anguish poor Bruin begins to prance;
He cannot stand still, and he therefore must dance.

Whenever he hears that tune at the gateway,
A dancing-devil possesses him straightway.

Myself in that caldron once sat, o'er the fire;
The music played and the heat was dire.

Then more than my skin was burnt, I regret it;
But never, ah never, can I forget it!

Whene'er of those days an echo has found me,
I instantly found the hot caldron around me.

'Neath the roots of my nails pierce the keen stings of
heat,—
Then straight I must dance upon metric feet.

There is no demand for sympathy in this or any of Ibsen's poetical confessions, but merely a cold and rather reticent admission of his suffering.

Voluntary Exile.

On the second day of April, 1864, Ibsen turned his back on his native land, and, except for a few brief summer visits, remained in voluntary exile for twenty-seven years. He gained much, but he was too old when he went abroad to recover his lost youth—if it is ever recoverable. Therefore he has always remained a stern and solitary pilgrim, a looker-on but not a partaker in the life of the age. Now we find him in Dresden, now in Munich, now again in Rome; but the chill discomfort of hired lodgings always clings about him, and never has he been sheltered by a roof which he could call his own. The joy of life, the absence of which he keenly feels in his own existence, he found no more in the warm and laughing South than in the chill and serious North. But what he did gain by his exile was an outpost of observation from which he could contemplate objectively his past years and the society in which they had been spent. This larger vision of the world which he has acquired has enabled him to apply a new standard to the life which lay behind him.

Brand.

It was in 1866, after two years' residence in Germany and Italy, that he sent home the dramatic poem *Brand*,

which was instantly recognized as a work of commanding interest, though it appears to have owed a large portion of its success to a misconception. Ninety-nine persons out of every hundred who read the book had not the remotest comprehension of its philosophical proposition, but yet derived from its perusal a vague edification. The vigorous denunciation of "halfness," pusillanimity and sin, the frequent repetition of biblical phrases, the austere and uncompromising spirit that pervaded the poem, gave them the impression that it was a religious work, a tremendous penitential sermon, such as we all, being sinners before God, might stand in need of. That *Brand* is, in its whole tenor and tendency, anti-christian, no one suspected; and if it had been suspected, the popularity of the book would have been greatly imperilled. The Norwegian Storting of 1866 certainly did not surmise it, or it would not have granted Ibsen a poet's salary of about \$600, for which three years previous he had applied in vain. This, in connection with his copyright, made him practically independent, enabling him to live for his work alone, without troubling himself about the financial aspect of his literary enterprises. The stoical sternness of his disposition and the frugality of his habits stood him in good stead, and not a single concession does he appear to have made to the public in his later dramas. The temptation "to tell lies for money," which Carlyle bewailed and manfully resisted, and to escape which he fled to Craigenputtock, seems never to have come to Ibsen, after he had definitely abandoned the Romantic drama, or if it came, it was promptly dis-

missed. As time passed, he determined more and more to vindicate the wisdom of his departure.

The League of Youth.

The events of Ibsen's life are henceforth his books, for he seems, properly speaking, to have had no life apart from them. In 1867 he published the remarkable dramatic poem, *Peer Gynt*; in 1869 *The League of Youth*, a comedy, and in 1871 a volume of poems, all of which abound in satirical allusions to his countrymen. In fact, *The League of Youth* was so offensive to Norwegian patriotism that it came near being hissed off the boards. During the first three performances at the Christiania theatre disturbances occurred, and the friends and enemies of the author nearly came to blows. Fisticuffs have been a favorite way of settling literary controversies in Norway since the time when Wergerland's drama, *The Campbells*, precipitated a great æsthetic battle, from which many withdrew very much the worse for wear.

Emperor and Galilean.

It had not been Ibsen's intention, when he left Norway, in 1864, to take up his permanent residence abroad. The position of artistic director of the Christiania theatre was kept open for him for some time, in the expectation that he would return. But having once known the comfortable independence of life among strangers, he was in no hurry to resume the

yoke of responsibility to every cackling critic who was bent upon earning a little notoriety at his expense. That vantage ground of clear observation which he had gained in Rome was not to be lightly abandoned—Rome, which juts like a huge promontory into history and affords even the modern pilgrim an imposing survey of “the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof.” The work that matured in this atmosphere was, indeed, in the nature of an historic survey, not of the rise and fall of Greek, Latin and Goth, but of the rise and fall of the successive empires of the spirit. *Emperor and Galilean* is even more than this. It is the prophecy of the spiritual evolution of man in the centuries to come. “It occupies,” says Jaeger, “an interesting position among Ibsen’s works. It is the last of his historical dramas, and stands, in its final form, with all its mysticism, midway between two such delineations of modern life as *The League of Youth* and *The Pillars of Society*.”

That Ibsen began about this time to grapple seriously with the problems of modern life is obvious; and he appears also to have dipped into the authors who represent the vanguard of modern thought. But, so far as we can judge from his writings, he can scarcely be said, in any sense, to have studied them. They furnished him hints, no doubt; stimulated, perhaps, his speculations and aroused his antagonisms. Georg Brandes had, during the preceding decade, labored in the face of obloquy and persecution to domesticate in Scandinavia the literature of the nineteenth century, through such representatives as Darwin, Stuart Mill,

Auguste Comte and Taine. It is very evident that Ibsen, as well as Björnson, profited by this propaganda, though they were, of course, not wholly dependent upon their native tongue for access to the world of letters. Ibsen was perfectly at home in German, and had a fair command of French and Italian; but of English he had not even conquered the rudiments.

The Franco-Prussian war had, in the meanwhile, not only made havoc in the cities of France, but had exploded some resonant bombs in the world of thought. Ibsen had absorbed, no doubt, in early years, the intense hostility to Germany and the predilection for France which had been prevalent in Scandinavian countries since the first Schleswig-Holstein war. Sympathy with Denmark naturally assumed the form of hatred of her enemy. Bismarck and Von Moltke were therefore to Ibsen repellent figures, and he displays considerable one-sidedness in his reference to them in the *Balloon-Letter to a Swedish Lady*.

Then came his dramas, *The Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House*, both of them belonging to the class of satirical comedies that created so profound a sensation. The latter, which dealt with the question, "Is marriage a failure?" went the round of the civilized world, achieving an amazing popularity. It was thrice translated into English, once into Dutch, French, Italian, Hungarian, Polish and Russian, and many times into German. It reached a hundred representations at two different Berlin theatres, and held the boards for longer and shorter periods on nearly all the provincial stages. This extraordinary success is not due primarily

to the perfection of its technical construction, but to the fact that it deals in a vital manner with a vital subject.

Why Is Marriage a Failure?

In Ibsen's treatment of the question, he takes the affirmative side for granted; so that instead of the stereotyped phrase, he asks, not "is," but "why is marriage a failure?" And this, in substance, is the way he answers it. As long as women are brought up primarily with a view to pleasing men, their individuality must of necessity be sacrificed. They have to conform to the masculine ideal of womanhood, not to their own ideal as determined by their own endowments, character and temperament. As long as marriage, in which man is, or at least appears to be, the chooser, is the normal fate of woman, it is difficult to see how this is to be remedied; for men will, of course, choose in accordance with their own ideas, whether right or wrong, of what is good and pleasing. If the fashion could be reversed, giving women the sole right of proposal, men would be put to the same disadvantage of having to conform, under penalty of celibacy, to an alien idea of attractiveness. Men are in some respects profoundly simple as compared with women; their cerebral machinery is less involved, less artfully complex. And they would experience far greater difficulty in adapting themselves, or feigning adaptation, to the new standards of excellence which might then be established. But in the very adaptation, however clumsy, they would become limber, pliable, molluscan; they would lose individuality and

lapse into comparative subordination. Such a thing as absolute equality of the sexes is, under the present social order, an impossibility, and it would be found quite as impossible under the proposed amendment.

Of the above problem the *Doll's House* is a most interesting exposition. A solution it is not, and does not profess to be. Ibsen's office, as he himself declares, is to ask questions, and he does not take it upon himself to answer them. He merely places the problem in the light of his own luminous contemplation, and exposes all its dangerous intricacies.

Ghosts, published in 1881, is hardly inferior in interest. It does not, however, rejoice in the popularity of its predecessor. Its calm and pitiless audacity is apt to terrify those whom it would instruct, and no one will wonder that it was not well received. Nevertheless it made a profound impression, and provoked the most passionate discussion. Even in England, where it was characterised by a leading journal as a mass of "vulgarity, egotism, coarseness and indecorum," it found resonance in many earnest minds, which gave the poet credit for a nobler motive than the mere desire to shock and startle.

Last Works.

The two succeeding plays, *An Enemy of the People* and *The Wild Duck*, aroused no immediate enthusiasm, nor was the author disappointed at the comparative absence of response, for it was hardly to be expected that the multitude would relish the derision which Ibsen so unsparingly heaped upon it. For all that,

these dramas, like their predecessors, slowly won their way, and made an impression, which, instead of being obliterated by the next literary sensation, was continually deepening.

There is something almost imposing in Ibsen's imperturbable serenity and his utter renunciation of the weak desire to please or flatter his public. At a time when nine-tenths of the books published have an air of being written to order, it is refreshing to encounter some which, resting upon a broad understructure, are but the visible summits of cloud-encompassed mountains of thought. Such a feeling we have in reading *Rosmersholm*, which appeared in 1886, and in a still higher degree in *The Lady of the Sea*, 1888, which, in spite of its somewhat obscure symbolism, is full of poetry and rises to lofty speculative heights. It forms, indeed, an indispensable supplement to the rebellious individualism of *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*, and marks psychologically an important stage in the author's development.

Ibsen's fame had meanwhile been steadily increasing, and was long since established in Germany, Austria and Holland. Now France, also, began to occupy itself with his work. M. Prozer brought out a series of excellent translations; the theatres, undismayed by failures, kept returning to him; and Edouard Rod and that prince of critics, Jules Lemaitre, furnished most luminous interpretations of his plays to the public journals. In fact, Lemaitre, whose wit and vivacity of style are more than rivalled by his philosophic insight, devotes two chapters to him in his delightful series, *Impressions*

de Théâtre, and, as he informs us, preceded the performance of *Hedda Gabler* at the Vaudevilles with a lecture. In fact, when the latter play appeared in 1890, Ibsen had come to be recognised in every civilized country as a potent force in the world of thought. Among other versions, an authorized English translation of his works by William and Charles Archer, clear, faithful, and painstaking, met with a considerable demand on both sides of the ocean; and this is sufficiently gratifying to the lovers of Ibsen, to reconcile them to the narrowness and lack of intelligence displayed in the majority of reviews in English and American journals; for it is only of late that he has begun to be understood.

A little note on the fly-leaf of Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, published in 1892, reads: "Almost simultaneously with the present original edition, authorized English, French and German editions will appear. Somewhat later a Russian, a Dutch, a Hungarian, a Bohemian and a Polish translation will follow." This indicates the desire to read him on the part of many nations.

IX.

Analysis of Ibsen's Drama.

Love's Comedy was the first of Ibsen's satirical works in which he handles so roughly the social questions of the day, and was the first of his masterpieces, though less known than some others to American readers. It was published in 1862, when the author was thirty-four years of age, still in the vigor of manhood and already ripe in experience. The Norwegian press received it with a howl of indignant protest, and its author was denounced as a ruthless iconoclast "devoid of ideality." A high authority at the university of Christiania declared, when Ibsen applied for the salary usually granted to poets of eminence, that the person who had written *Love's Comedy*, deserved a stick rather than a stipend. The play was not only "immoral and unpoetical, as must be every view which is unable to reconcile the real to the ideal," but it was pronounced to be provincial, and a "pitiful product of literary trifling."

This chorus of censure, though it does not rival in vehemence and unreason the extracts from London journals on later productions, is yet significant as sounding the first note of alarm in the Philistine camp at Ibsen's attack upon its "ideals." *The Comedy of Love*

is, indeed, an attack upon the institution of marriage; but, for all that, it is not immoral. It does not, even by inference, recommend license; but, as his biographer, Henri Jarger, happily puts it, "scourges love in love's own name," and holds up an ideal which, by contrast, makes the reality, as we know and see it, repulsive.

The situation is briefly this: Mrs. Halm, a lady of good family, has two daughters, Anna and Svanhild. The former engages herself to a theological student named Lind, and the other is loved by a gifted young poet named Falk. Lind, who had, or fancied he had, an heroic strain in him, had aspired to lead a life of noble renunciation, and, to prove the sincerity of his faith, had resolved to go as a missionary to preach the gospel to the Norwegian emigrants on the American prairies. But now, when he is betrothed, all the cousins and aunts and the whole swarm of female busy-bodies rush in upon him, and insist that, as an engaged man, he has obligations to his fiancée and to society; he has no right to talk of sacrifice and renunciation, which would now also include her. Lind, it must be admitted, is not averse to entertain this view, and, after a mere sham resistance, he surrenders all thoughts of heroism and applies for a place as teacher in a girls' school.

In the case of the department clerk, Styver, and Miss Skjære we have the same story, though with modifications. These two had engaged themselves, many years before, when they were young and romantic; but Styver has never been able to scrape together enough to marry on. In the meanwhile they have grown middle-aged and practical; all the bloom of the youthful senti-

ment has been rubbed off; every vestige of poetry has vanished from their relation, and the constant theme of their thought and speech is money—money—money. They need a certain sum in order to enable them to go to housekeeping in a respectable manner, and now they are only concerned about loans, interest and chattel mortgages.

A third instance, and a glaring one, of this translation of the poetry of love into the prose of matrimony is the Reverend Mr. Straamand and his wife, Maren. The pastor had in his youth been something of a genius—had played the guitar, composed music and published *Seven Sonnets to My Maren*. He had even the courage to marry his lady, who was “the daughter of a lumber firm,” without the consent of her parents, and had bravely set up housekeeping in a garret, with supreme disregard of the world’s opinion. Presently, however, Straamand had procured a country living and a parsonage. He had grown comparatively prosperous, and in the course of time had become the father of twelve children, “with a near prospect of the thirteenth.” Through the door of wedlock he and his Maren had plunged into a slough of direst prose, having lost all individual life and surrendered all higher aspirations in the mere effort to provide for their numerous offspring. Like many of the lower animals who have scarcely any conscious life—who are born, breed and die—they have become mere mechanical instruments in the hands of Fate for the propagation of their species.

But the representative of life’s prose, the wholesale

merchant Guldstad, is, curiously enough, the most estimable and sympathetic character in the whole play, and it is into his mouth that Ibsen puts the defense of matrimony—not the love-match, but the marriage de convenance:

Ah, no, there is yet something which is better.
It is the tranquil, gentle, cordial flow
Of warm esteem, which must its object honor,
As much as rapture in a blissful trance.
It is the feeling of delight in duty,
The joy of care, the blessed peace of home,
Of two wills fondly yielding to each other,
Of watchful outlook, lest no stone should hurt
Her foot, the dear one's, where in life she treads.
It is the gentle hand which heals all wounds,
The virile force which bears on willing shoulders,
The peace of mind extending through the years;
The steady arm which props and lifts securely;—
That, Svanhild, is the contribution I can offer
Toward the building of your happiness.

Falk, with his uncertain temper, his ecstasies and despairs and the excessive sensitiveness supposed to be peculiar to poets, is fully conscious that he can offer nothing equivalent to this secure comfort, peaceful equanimity and tender protection. But it is not this consciousness which primarily makes him resolve to renounce his beloved; it is the fear that his love, which is now glorious in its perfect bloom, will and must, like all mortal things, fade and perish under the slow tooth of time. It will endure long, he says, but he cannot in sincerity promise that it will last forever. Svanhild, considering the matter in this view, exclaims:

Oh, "long, long," poor, miserable word!
To "long" endure, oh, what is that to love?
It is its doom—the mildew on the seed.
For "love must count upon eternal life"
That song is silenced now; some day instead
It shall run thus: "I loved thee, love, last year,"
Nay, never thus shall wane our day of bliss,
Perish with weeping sunset in the west;
Let now our sun be quenched, a fair mirage,
At its high noon, while gloriously it shines.

Falk.—(Frightened.) What wilt thou, Svanhild?

Svanhild.—We are spring's bright children;
Behind it there shall come no dreary autumn,
When in thy breast the bird of song is silent,
And yet yearneth thither whence he came.
Behind it never shall the wintry pall
Enshroud the chill white corpse of all thy dreams.
Our love, the glad, all-conquering, victorious,
No blight shall touch, no age shall wither.
Die shall it, as it lived, rich, young and strong.

Falk.—(In agony of grief.) And far from thee—what worth
has life to me?

Svanhild.—What were it near to me when love were dead?

Falk.—A home!

Svanhild.—Where strove the elf of bliss with death?

Falk.—(With strong resolution.) Throw the ring away!

Svanhild.—(With enthusiasm.) Thou wishest it?

Falk.—Throw it away! Full well I understand thee.
In this way only, Svanhild, do I win thee!
For as the grave doth lead to life's bright dawn,
Thus love is consecrated unto life,
When, purged of yearning and of wild desire,
It flees delivered to the spirit home
Of memory.

Svanhild.—(Joyously, as she throws the ring far out into the
fjord.) Now I have lost thee for this nether life,
Now I have won thee for eternity!

It would be a mistake to interpret this as an act of religious asceticism. Ibsen's conception of renunciation is that it steels and braces the personality and brings out, as by a fiery test, whatever latent strength and virtue there may be in it. The bitter but salubrious cup of woe which he has himself drained to the dregs he puts to the lips of every soul that is virile enough to endure the wholesome discipline of sorrow. Slothful ease and the joy of possession cease, in time, satiety and a weary discontent; then, when love begins to wane, and even passion to subside, comes the necessity to feign and to lie, first to the once beloved, then to ourselves, and finally, when the ideal is hopelessly shattered, we find a shabby consolation in the reflection that our lot is not exceptional—that, in fact, we cannot expect perfection in this world, but must accept things as they are. It is to save his lovers from this fate that Ibsen makes them voluntarily renounce each other. It is with a dim prevision of this danger that Falk, in the first act, exclaims:

With blight of blindness smite my eyes' bright mirror;
I'll sing the glory of the radiant skies.
Send me but anguish, crushing, torturing,
For but a month—a vast, gigantic sorrow—
And I'll sing the jubilant joy of life.

Ghosts.

When *A Doll's House* first appeared on the stage, a hundred critics cried out at the immorality of the dénouement of the play, declaring it to be subversive

of matrimony, which is the head of the corner in social structures. *Ghosts* is Ibsen's reply to these guardians of morality. "If," he says in substance, "instead of leaving her husband and children, Nora had remained, this is what might have happened." The two situations are not exactly parallel; for Helmer, though a pig-headed, narrow-visioned man, was not dissipated; and, in order to make the reply adequate, we have to supply some intermediate stage of unfavorable development on his part, induced, perhaps, by his marital infelicity. However, that is of minor consequence. As it was not Ibsen's intention to write a sequel to *A Doll's House*, he could not, of course, reintroduce the same characters. But the close relationship of the one play to the other is sufficiently obvious.

Ghosts is the most radical, the most revolutionary drama which the literature of the nineteenth century has produced. It undertakes to investigate the foundations of our accepted morality, and finds them to be weather-worn, sagged and out of plumb. It may, perhaps, be worth while, from time to time, to make such an investigation; but, as with all investigations, the result depends largely upon the spirit in which it is undertaken. Though it must be admitted that there is considerable force in Ibsen's indictment, which is calculated to confute the conventional arguments, there is, nevertheless, a flaw in it, for it attempts to prove more than is warranted by its premises. That the sins of the father are visited upon the children, even unto the third and fourth generation, and that such visitation involves injustice to the children, we may readily

concede without going to the length that Mrs. Alving does, who declares in the play that, the moment she begins to pick at a little knot, the whole fabric of morality unravels in her hands.

The habit of praise and censure presupposes some degree of personal accountability. Mrs. Alving, fearing the reprobation of the community, and wishing to bequeath an honorable name to her son, conceals her husband's debaucheries, straining every nerve to preserve the respectability of the family. The main intent of the drama is, however, to prove, by a truly ferocious logic, that in this endeavor she was wrong. The chamberlain, her husband, was a joyous, vigorous, full-blooded nature, strapped in a strait-jacket of puritanic morality, and his transgressions, though they destroyed him, were the inevitable and legitimate results of his character and environment. Therefore, she concluded, she has no right to conceal, far less to place obstacles in the way of, his marital infidelity and his convivial excesses. But though there is a show of logic in this conclusion, is not the fact that the vices which Alving practised destroyed him, sufficient evidence that they are, from nature's point of view, not legitimate? For some reason, she chooses to perpetuate only the temperate, self-restrained man, who has his passions and desires under control.

It would be easy to frame sentimental objections to this process, which, nevertheless, is, in the main, merciful and conducive to the greatest good of humanity. It may be said, and few would now deny, that the ghosts of our barbarous ancestors haunt our spirits and

lurk in our flesh, manifesting themselves in lawless impulses and savage desires; and that, accordingly, we are not accountable for actions thus prenataally determined. But what is gained by such an argument? Practically nothing, except to arouse a greater compassion for the offender and a more lenient judgment. But Ibsen goes still further and endeavors, by dangerous sophistry, to blot out the boundary between good and evil. His whole reasoning, as embodied in Mrs. Alving, leaves a large and importunate interrogation mark in our minds as to whether goodness, in the accepted sense, is practically laudable and, on the whole, to be preferred to wickedness. In propounding this query, and employing all his ingenuity and brilliant dialectics in its exposition, Ibsen is, or endeavors to be, strictly impartial, aiming to get at the truth in whatever unexpected place it may prove to be hidden.

The plot of *Ghosts* is briefly as follows: Mrs. Alving, the widow of the late captain and chamberlain Alving, has spent her life in building up a fictitious reputation for probity and moral excellence for her profligate husband. And now, to crown her work, she has erected and endowed a large orphan asylum, which is to bear the name of the deceased and, as it were, advertise his virtues to all the world. In this pious endeavor she has succeeded beyond expectation, and she is disposed to congratulate herself on the self-sacrifice and martyrdom of the many hideous years she has shared with the brutal reprobate. She had, to be sure, once rebelled, and, in her detestation of the captain's vices, sought refuge in the house of a clergyman named Manders,

who had loved her in her girlhood and whom she had loved. But the pastor refused to receive her, and in impressive words persuaded her to return to her husband, take up her cross and meekly bear it. In due time a son is born to her; but, in order to conceal from him his father's degradation, she sends him away from home when he is but a few years old. Oswald, as he is named, grows up in Paris and becomes an artist of much promise. Now, when the chamberlain is dead, she yearns for a sight of Oswald and induces him to spend the winter in his home. It is her purpose to be done, once for all, with her husband and all that appertains to him, and to begin a new and happy life with her son. Every penny that Alving has left her she has set aside for the endowment of the asylum, and every memory which he has bequeathed her she strives resolutely to banish. She stoutly persuades herself that Oswald takes after her, and she is shocked when Pastor Manders notices his resemblance to his father. Oswald is, however, soon to justify the clergyman's remarks. He promptly reveals the same propensities which wrecked his father's life, and his mother sees the whole beautiful structure which her maternal hope had built collapse at a breath, like a house of cards. The asylum, which the pastor has dissuaded her from insuring, lest she show distrust of Divine Providence, is burned, and all her fond calculations are rudely overthrown. It is the dead man's ghost, which, refusing to be laid, walks abroad in life, trailing behind it a long train of calamities.

Terrible, in spite of its reticence, is the scene where

Oswald confesses that he is afflicted with a strange disease, which for long periods incapacitates him of work and causes him horrible pains in the head. The Parisian physician whom he consulted said that there had been something worm-eaten about him even from his very birth, and he added significantly that the sins of the father are visited upon the children. The young man had indignantly denied this imputation, and in order to convince the doctor, translated certain passages of his mother's letters relating to his father. The leech had then given him the alternative of believing that it was his own youthful indiscretions which had sapped his strength and ruined his life. That he was hopelessly lost he well knew, and the fate which stared him in the face, out of the dark future, was madness and torturing misery. In order to escape this fate, he carried in his pocket a morphine powder which he meant to take when he saw the Furies approaching, and he implores his mother, by the love she bears him, to give it to him, in case they should clutch him so suddenly as to deprive him of his power to act.

All this, of course, is horribly revolting. A situation is here devised which would seem to justify a mother in taking her son's life. The dreadful interrogation mark is here again, and a chill, insidious doubt steals into the reader's mind as to the legitimacy of all inherited morals. They need testing in the seams, apparently; and that is the task to which Ibsen has applied himself. It is an extremely tangled web he has woven, and neither warp nor woof runs straight according to the traditional pattern.

The tragic dénouement approaches with relentless necessity. At the burning of the asylum Oswald overexerts himself, and on coming home is distracted and bewildered. The symptoms of the disease which the French physician had predicted declare themselves, and his mother, who had hoped against hope, sees him hovering on the verge of madness and then lapsing into helpless imbecility. To all her terrified questions and exclamations he only mutters: "The sun, the sun—give me the sun." In speechless horror she stands staring at him, clutching the morphine powder in her hand, whereupon the curtain falls.

X.

Swedish Literature and Drama.

The literature of Sweden, during the Middle Ages, is almost as poor and scant as the Danish at this period; for the conditions for its development were essentially the same in both countries. The clergy were for a long time in exclusive possession of all intellectual culture, and this gave to theology the foremost place. The convents became the centre of this culture, which could not transcend the bounds to which it had been carried by the ecclesiastical students who visited foreign universities. The latter could not bring home more than they had acquired, and the little learning thus introduced, instead of becoming rooted and established, became impoverished and lost its hold on the people. Nor was there any noticeable improvement, when Sweden, in 1477, established her own university at Upsala. There was for a time no real progress, since the elements that might have served as a foundation for a national Swedish literature were disregarded, while those which came from abroad were neglected and fell into decay. The clergy manifested an increasing distaste for the sciences; the monks grew more and more ignorant, and

the study of the ancient classics at length ceased. Legends monopolized everything, and the noble Roman tongue degenerated into monkish Latin. Still, conditions were somewhat less unfavorable in Sweden than in Denmark; for the clergy had not isolated themselves so absolutely from the laity, and thus the people were not wholly abandoned to ignorance.

The intellectual life awakened by the Reformation and the struggle between the old faith and the new was followed by a literary activity that soon partly abandoned the religious field in which the movement had been inaugurated, and took up subjects of more or less general interest. Printing had been introduced in Sweden in the latter half of the fifteenth century, and the first book printed in that country was a Latin work about Katarina, a daughter of St. Bergitta, which was published in 1474. It was not until 1491 that a thoroughly equipped printing-press was established in Stockholm, and soon afterward appeared the first book printed in Swedish, the translation of a Latin treatise on the temptations of the Devil.

Omitting further mention of early Swedish literature, let us turn at once to the drama, the inception of which dates from the sixteenth century. For this class of literature there was a peculiar element at hand, namely the "dance plays," which had been very popular with the people since time out of mind, and which had been far more widely used in Sweden than in Denmark or Norway. On this basis Sweden might have developed a peculiar dramatic literature, had other conditions been favorable, but here, as in the rest of the North, there

was produced instead the school-comedy. Its original purpose was to train the students of the colleges and of the university in the classical languages, and at the same time to promote morality by introducing examples of good conduct. Later, Swedish was substituted for Latin and Greek; but the original pedagogic tendency was preserved. The first author of a school comedy was Olaus Petri, who wrote a *Tobiæ Comedia*, and, like all subsequent plays of this kind, it was in verse. For some time these dramas took their plot entirely from the Bible, adhering with servile accuracy to the scriptural text without seeking to secure any dramatic development. The only exception was the *Comedy of Holofernes and Judith*, which in merit surpasses all the rest.

Origin of the Secular Drama.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century dramatized biblical stories were succeeded by secular plays, which took their plot from the old classical literature, but in other respects ranked no higher than their predecessors. One of the best of them and also the oldest, entitled *A Merry Comedy by Name Thisbe*, was written by Asteropherus, and played for the first time in 1610. To the best of this class belongs also a drama by Catonius, which treats of the fate of Troy, and is written with a certain degree of dramatic skill. The *Judas Redivivus* of Rondeletius is worthy of notice on account of its scenes from popular life, and for other pictures of the times to which it belongs.

Johannes Messenius now founded an entirely new

school, in which he soon found imitators. He selected subjects from Swedish history as the basis of his dramas, intending to write fifty comedies and tragedies representing his country's history from the introduction of Christianity to the Reformation, just as had been done in reference to the history of England by his great contemporary, Shakespeare. But he completed only six, all of which were received with a favor entirely out of proportion to their merit. They simply relate history in the form of dialogue, and their only interest consists in the songs and scenes from life, the former written in imitation of the popular ballad. Among the successors of Messenius, Andreas Prytz is the most remarkable. In some of his national dramas we find a certain satirical element, and they are also of value on account of their descriptions of manners and customs.

Besides these secular dramas there were comedies with allegorical characters, corresponding to the mediæval "Moralities." In the course of the seventeenth century the school comedies gradually disappeared, as did also other and similar compositions, especially when Queen Christina introduced at the court a French medley of opera and ballet, presented with a wealth of scenic effect.

Swedish Supremacy.

The seventeenth century was in all respects the great age of Sweden. A line of kings, the like of which hardly any other country can boast, extended the boundary of the country by successful wars, and carefully fostered the development of natural resources. True, the country

could not maintain itself in the eminence to which it had suddenly been raised. But the proud consciousness of power that conquest had aroused among the people gave impulse to a greater activity in every direction, including literature. In the intellectual field it was, however, only the seed that was planted, and the ripening of the fruit was reserved for a later time. All the Swedish kings of the seventeenth century, but especially Gustavus Adolphus, and Charles XII, took a deep and lively interest in the arts and sciences. The former founded schools and colleges, and at a great sacrifice of his private fortune infused a new life into the Upsala university, which had fallen into decay during the troubles of the Reformation period, but now rose again to importance. The regency during the minority of Karl XI founded in 1668 the university of Lund, and the king himself founded several scientific institutions. At the instigation of Queen Christina a number of foreign scholars were invited to the country, such as Des Cartes, Hugo Grotius, and Loccenius. The nobility also distinguished themselves in the sciences and counted many eminent and learned men in their ranks. In brief, intellectual industry fully corresponded to the position which Sweden occupied in other respects during this era.

French Influence.

Under French influence the drama made an effort to abandon the student and court circles to which it had hitherto been limited, and to appeal to the masses. When the school-comedies disappeared, they were re-

placed by plays in modern shape. The French dramatists were studied and translated, and many imitations were produced. At court allegorical ballets, in the form of operettas in rhymed verse, with music and dancing, were chiefly in favor, and at the university tragedies were most in vogue. About 1660 Urban Hjärne, physician, dramatist and stage manager, erected a theatre in the castle at Upsala, where were given by a company of students plays partly written by himself. Some quarter of a century later, a similar troupe appeared first in Upsala and then in Stockholm, where they remained for several years. Isak Börk was its most prominent member, writing for this so-called "Swedish theatre" a number of successful pieces, including the *Tragedy of Darius*, the materials for which he borrowed from Curtius. In 1690 the playhouse was closed, and it was long before the country had another national theatre, meanwhile contenting itself with foreign companies.

Reign of Gustav III.

The development of Swedish poetry under French influences reached its climax during the reign of Gustav III, when the language acquired remarkable suppleness and flexibility, needing only poets to display its capabilities. These were not far to seek, the king gathering around him such a galaxy of talent, that his epoch was compared with the Augustan age. Moreover, he was himself a poet, with tastes developed in the French school, and as the centre of his circle

strongly devoted to its tenets. The light, flippant style and frivolous, playful manner which characterize the French literature of the eighteenth century gradually monopolized the field. Yet there was not wanting a national element, independent of French models and fully conscious of its importance.

In the public institutions, which Gustav established for the advancement of literature, the French element was specially favored. Of the Swedish academy, founded in 1786, on the model of the French academy, the avowed purpose was to "support and encourage poetry, eloquence, history, and the study of the Swedish language." It does not appear, however, how this was accomplished, since from the outset the election of members has been, as still it is, purely a question of etiquette. Four years before, the king had also founded the National theatre, and here, likewise, he had done his best to encourage French taste. He was himself the author of several dramas, taking their themes from Swedish history, and these he wrote in prose, ordering the poet, Johan Henrik Kellgren, to reproduce them in verse, after which they were set to music and played as operas.

The Academic Group.

The poets of the Gustavian era were divided into two groups, one representing the French and the other the national element. To the former belonged Creutz and Gyllenborg; but Kellgren was its most prominent member. He was not only one of the most remarkable poets of the age, but was also noted as a critic and a

writer on æsthetics. He was eminently a lyric poet, and this form he gave to the king's dramas which he rendered into verse. After the death of Kellgren, Karl Gustav, of Leopold, became the leader of the group. His dramatic works, though of little value, were received with the greatest favor by his contemporaries, and especially his tragedies, written in the pseudo-classical style, including *Virginia* and *Oden eller Asarne Invandring*. For the latter he was rewarded by the king with a laurel wreath from Virgil's tomb.

Among the national circle of poets, Karl Michael Bellman was by far the greatest and most original. Karl Israel Hallman is chiefly known for his dramatic works, especially his parodies on operas and tragedies in the French style, then in vogue, and his bold farces, which, in spite of, or perhaps on account of, their coarseness, became extremely popular. The last and best of his comedies, *Opportunity Makes the Thief*, in which he introduced verses written and set to music by Bellman, was accepted as a national drama, and still belongs to the répertoire of the Swedish stage.

Olof Kexel also wrote comedies, some of them strongly farcical, and in which the author was by no means squeamish in choice or treatment of themes. Of this order are his *Kapten Puff* and *Michel Wingler*, the former being adopted as a national play.

Lidner.

Other of "Bellman's cousins," as were styled the poets of the national school, and especially Johan Mag-

nus Lannerstjerna and Karl Envallson, were writers of comedies, the latter producing more than eighty, one of which, though a free adaptation from the French, was received with unstinted applause. Neither of them became eminent; but their plays were at the time extremely acceptable to the management of the young Stockholm theatre. Still another dramatist was Bengt Lidner, whose first important work, the tragedy of *Erik XIV*, was written at Paris, at the instigation of Creutz, in the traditional style. While containing many fine passages, it was far less successful than his lyric drama, *Medea*, which, together with two poems written in rapid succession, won for him general recognition. He was also the author of a number of short pieces set to music and performed as oratorios.

Phosphorist and Gothic Schools.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the French academic element still predominated in Swedish literature; but the foundation on which this foreign structure rested was completely undermined. The successful efforts of Ewald and Baggesen to establish a Danish school of song had done much to increase the desire in Sweden for an independent national poetry. But none of the opponents of the old school were qualified to become leaders of the new, and until these were found, the change could not be made. A decisive impulse was given by the revolution of 1809, which was followed by an almost unrestricted freedom of the press and a more intimate acquaintance with modern

German literature, especially with Schelling's philosophy and the Romanticism based thereon. The banner of the new ideas was first raised by Lorenzo Hammarsköld, around whom gathered a circle of young, enthusiastic poets. Phosphorists, they were termed, from the name of their periodical *Phosphoros*, which was their organ. They worshipped Romanticism in the form in which it had appeared in Germany, with its vague longing and abstract reflections, its depreciation of reality, its partiality for the misty Middle Age and the graceful southern form of versification. Side by side with this tendency there sprang up another movement, which had more of interest for real life, and was preëminently national. It received the name of the Gothic school, because it strove to make the old Norse or Gothic mythology and poetry, together with the old antiquity of the North the basis of national culture and art. A few of the most prominent poets were independent of both schools and also of the academy. Of this neutral party Franz Michel Franzen and Johan Olof Wallin were the most prominent. Franzen, who was a native of Finland and became a Swedish bishop, gained the prize offered by the academy for a poem in honor of Creutz. His talent was for lyric verse, and in this only he excelled. His dramatic works, the most ambitious of which was *The Lapmaid in the King's Park*, were coldly received.

Atterbom.

The greatest of the Phosphorist poets was Peter Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, one of the founders of the

literary society calling itself "Aurorabund," which became the chief seat of Romanticism. His first important work, written before he was twenty, was a comedy extremely polemical in character, published in the *Polyfem*, the organ of the society. Of his later plays the most remarkable is a series of dramatized fairy-tales, among the best of which are *The Isle of Bliss* and *Blue-bird*. They are full of outbursts of passion and fantastic descriptions painted in glowing colors, which, when considered separately, are very beautiful; but from a dramatic standpoint all these pieces are unsatisfactory. The delineation of character is obscure and incomplete, and the action is constantly interrupted by lyric episodes, which seem to have no relation to the drama.

Of no small repute among the Phosphorists were the dramatic writers Stagnelius and Johan Börjesson. In the religious drama of *Martyrerne* Stagnelius has described in thrilling tones his idea of life as a punishment and a term of suffering. His *Knight's Tower* is full of gorgeous diction; but the theme is unsuitable for the theatre. *Bacchantorna*, in the style of the antique, is better adapted for a stage play, as also are *Visbur* and *Sigurd Ring* with their old Norse motives, though gnostic principles are here so prominently displayed as to mar the dramatic effect. Of more general interest are *Love After Death* and *The Pleasure Girl in Rome*. Many of the short poems of Stagnelius are of excellent quality, especially those in which he imitates the style of the popular ballad.

Of Johan Börjesson the chief works are the tragedy

of *Erik XIV*, *The Son of Erik XIV*, *From the Youth of Charles XII*, *The Sun Sets* and *The Brother's Guilt*. All are more or less imitations of Shakespeare; but, while containing many beautiful passages, with here and there a spark of genius, are deficient in life and action. Karl Frederick Dahlgren was a gifted poet, who, taking Bellman for his model, wrote original and graceful descriptions of nature. Foremost among literary women who were also Phosphorists, was Julia Christina Nyberg, better known under the pseudonym of Euphrosyne. In her descriptions of nature is a fine idyllic coloring, strongly tinged with Romantic mysticism. Those worthy of being mentioned in connection with her lacked her versatility, her imagination and her peculiar charm of expression, especially when she addressed herself to the themes that particularly touched her spirit.

The Gothic and Phosphoristic schools were severely handled by "Vitalis," whose real name was Erik Sjöberg. His attacks on their vagaries are full of wit and humor, but also full of self-conceit, which detracts from their merit. Henrik Ling represented the extreme tendency of the Gothic school. As with Sjöberg, his life was one long struggle with poverty, relieved only by military service, for, as he boasted, he served under five different kings. Ling was a lyric poet, and as such wrote excellent verses; but he aspired to be also an epic poet and a dramatist, to be both the Shakespeare and Homer of his countrymen. His plays, which dealt chiefly with Norse legend, were too discursive for the stage; his characters were not lifelike; and the beauty

of his lyric passages could not redeem his works from failure.

Tegner and His School.

The chief apostle of the Gothic school was Esaias Tegner, who united all that was best worth preserving in the various sects, satisfying not only the national element but the requirements of art. His reputation grew with every new poem, his fame extending far beyond his native land. The climax was reached in the *Frithjofs Saga*, a cycle of romances founded on the old Norse legend of that name. It is probably the most famous of all Scandinavian poems and was translated into nearly all European tongues, including twenty-one English versions and nineteen in German. Many of the passages are, however, so dazzling with their gorgeous imagery as to impair the poetic effect, and it has been said that "the lyric element has been hung as a beautiful drapery over very ordinary materials." His *Children of the Lord's Supper*, also translated into English by Longfellow, is marked by a deep and earnest religious sentiment, and his narrative poem *Axel* is rich in beautiful episodes. Tegner joined the Gothic union, but kept aloof from its exaggerations. With the Phosphorists he would have nothing to do, frequently taking them to task and ridiculing with scathing sarcasm their exclusiveness and want of a definite purpose. Another famous writer of the Gothic school is Bernhardt von Beskow, whose dramatic works, including *Erik XIV* and *Torkel Knutson*, are among the best that Sweden has produced. As historical pictures his plays are ex-

tremely interesting, but are lacking in sustained and vigorous action, a fault that is common to the Swedish drama

A legion of imitators followed blindly in the footsteps of Tegner, most of them merely amateurs, while those who had talent carried their devotion so far that they completely sacrificed their own independence. Even his faults were regarded as virtues and these were freely copied, rhetoric making itself conspicuous at the expense of poetry.

Recent Authors.

Among the most conspicuous were Asser Lindeblad, Karl Johan and Ludvig Almquist, the last of whom wrote a number of dramas, some of them meeting with considerable favor, though inferior to his epics, which are among the best in Swedish literature. Their themes are sufficiently eccentric. In one, a son of Don Juan, whenever he falls in love—which is not seldom—discovers that the girl whom he intends to make his bride is his father's daughter; in another the apostles figure as lunatics. In some of his tales are fine descriptions of popular life, such as may be compared with Björnson's peasant stories.

August Blanche was one of the most successful of recent Swedish dramatists, presenting the social life of Stockholm in humorous and amusing situations, though somewhat faulty in technique. Together with those of Johan Jolin and others, his comedies did much to encourage realism, coming as they did at a time when the people had been surfeited with sentimentalism.

Within recent years Sweden has produced little of superior quality, the tendency being more and more toward the realistic basis. Under the name of *Talis Qualis* Carl Vilhelm Strandberg wrote verses of political import, at first in imitation of the German, and then in songs of his own, which rank among the best that Sweden has produced in this direction. Of excellent quality also are his translations of Byron's works. Frans Hedberg is the author of some very fine historical plays, and Ernst Daniel Björck was crowned by the academy for his *Naturbilder*, which, together with a few other poems, raised expectations which were cut short by an early death. Kings Charles XV and Oscar II must also be classed among Swedish poets, the former dealing with themes from northern antiquities, and the latter noted as the author of a prize poem and for his fine translations of Herder's *Cid* and Goethe's *Tasso*. Other translations worthy of mention are those of Shakespeare by Karl August Hagberg, of Tasso and Ariosto by Karl Anders Kullberg, of Dante and Camoens by Nils Loven, and of Milton by Emanuel Oman. History and philosophy are well represented, and in science there are several names that are known throughout the world.

Finland.

Beyond the Scandinavian peninsula, and east of the Gulf of Bothnia, lies Finland, poetically called "the land of the thousand lakes." This country is inhabited by the same sturdy Northern race, and was subject to the

dominion of Sweden until 1809. Then, amid the political turmoil of the Napoleonic era, it was annexed to Russia, but under the most solemn guarantees that it should preserve its language, institutions and laws. A strong national spirit was evoked, and one of the most remarkable results was the recovery of old ballads from the lips of the peasantry in remote districts. These, when gathered and combined by Dr. Elias Lönnrot, were found to constitute a truly Homeric epic, called *Kalevala*. Its publication produced a sensation throughout the literary world. Its simple metre has been adopted by Longfellow in his *Hiawatha*. Some modern poems and tales have been produced by Finnish authors, but they have not contributed to the drama.

THE LOQUACIOUS BARBER

(MESTER GERT WESTPHALER ELLER DEN
MEGET TALENDE BARBEER)

OF

LUDWIG VON HOLBERG

Translated from the Reimer edition by

W. H. H. CHAMBERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GERT WESTPHALER, a Barber

GUNILDE, his Mother.

GILBERT, a Druggist.

LEONORA, his Daughter.

GOTTHARD, his Brother

LEONARD, a Distiller.

PERNILLE, Gilbert's Maid.

HENRY, Servant to Leonard.

A LAWYER.

A NOTARY.

A DRUG CLERK.

THE DRUGGIST'S BOY.

SCENE I.

Henry and Pernille.

Henry.—Good morning, Miss, I see you come out of the drug store. Do they keep pretty little maids there?

Pernille.—No, comrade, you're mistaken; I'm no pretty little maid, I'm only an apothecaries' box. What silly questions you ask!

Henry.—Oh, that you were only an apothecaries' box!

Pern.—Why so? Would you like to take a dose?

Henry.—I'd rather give one; but really, in earnest, are you the maid there, or something else?

Pern.—I'm something else.

Henry.—Ah! you're a prescription, perhaps?

Pern.—Yes. No. Yes. I'm a clyster. What a simpleton you are!

Henry.—Oh, excuse my chaffing. I really ought to be planning and scheming here for my master.

Pern.—Who is your master?

Henry.—Mr. Leonard, the distiller, that lives just ever yonder.

Pern.—Oh, I know him; he's a handsome young fellow. Isn't he in good health?

Henry.—No, he's been stricken with a sore disease, that nothing can cure but a remedy from your drug store.

Pern.—Have you a prescription for the remedy?

Henry.—Yes, indeed.

Pern.—What doctor prescribed it?

Henry.—Doctor Cupid.

Pern.—That's false; Doctor Cupid left these parts years and years ago.

Henry.—But I tell you that he certainly is here yet.

Pern.—Then I fib, do I? You're a fool! Let me see the prescription.

Henry.—The prescription calls for Miss Leonora, the druggist's daughter. Now you can guess what I am driving at, can't you?

Pern.—Ha! ha! your master has perhaps fallen in love with our lassie?

Henry.—That's it; you've hit it.

Pern.—Well, then, I'm truly sorry for him, since the only remedy that can cure him has already been bespoken for another, as your master himself may have heard.

Henry.—Oh, I know that well enough; she's promised to our surgeon-barber, Gert Westphaler.

Pern.—But why didn't your master apply sooner? He might have won her easily; for he's a good honest fellow.

Henry.—He didn't for a moment suppose that your master would marry her off so young. He's really had his eye on her for ever so long, but wouldn't permit it to be known on account of her youth.

Pern.—Why, where was your master born?

Henry.—Right here in this city.

Pern.—Pshaw! that cannot be.

Henry.—Why not?

Pern.—Because he seems to be so little acquainted with the ways of our young ladies of to-day that he does not even know they are determined to bear the burden of their maidenhood no longer than their fifteenth year. That's what I mean.

Henry.—But is the marriage definitely decided upon?

Pern.—Only between the parents; the young couple haven't had an understanding as yet.

Henry.—Since when between the elders?

Pern.—They came to a definite conclusion a month or so ago. Gert himself, however, has not yet spoken of the matter to the girl; which, by the way, has displeased very much the parents on both sides.

Henry.—Are they contracting the marriage against his will?

Pern.—Not at all. In fact, he sent his mother here himself to see if she could get the girl for him.

Henry.—Then I can't fathom it. I'd never take him for a shy, retiring fellow.

Pern.—He's anything but that. He's rather of the species that always sticks themselves in.

Henry.—Well then, what is the meaning of it? He's in love, is not at all backward, and yet has never told his love to the object of his affection. Perhaps she is cold, indifferent, and won't grant him a hearing.

Pern.—Oh, no! She is quite content to fulfill her father's wish and is expecting day after day her lover to declare himself.

Henry.—Ah! I see it now; you're vexed because at first I chaffed you, and now you're paying me back in the same coin.

Pern.—No, I'm not so vindictive. I'll tell you just how it all happens. Every man has his little peculiarities; now Gert's consists in perpetually chattering to people.

Henry.—Why how can he talk so much; is he so very learned?

Pern.—There are three or four subjects that he's for ever drivelling over. The first is an old bishop, one Arius, who was persecuted on account of a certain book he brought to light. Another is of the "Creis"-Counts or "Pfaltz" Princes in Germany. A third is Turkey, and the fourth, a journey he took from Hadersleben to Kiel. Now, should it so happen that you begin to converse with him, the first thing you know you find yourself in the middle of Turkey or Germany.

Henry.—What an eccentricity!

Pern.—Now, for example, should you be so imprudent as to say to him: "Fine weather to-day," he'll immediately make

answer: "Just such weather as I was favored with, once upon a time, as I was leaving Hadersleben on my way to Kiel," and with this as a starter he'll rattle off, until he's hoarse, the entire scurvy trip, and so intent and persistent is his narration that he'll not spare you a single syllable of the journey until he's finally arrived at Kiel; not if you should drag him from the house by the hair of his head. 'Tis in like manner that he falls into this perpetual chatter with our lassie when he should be speaking of his suit. For this reason my master has often been tempted to politely show Gert the door, but his mother has so far always succeeded in preventing it.

Henry.—But how does the girl herself like that sort of thing? for people so prone to talk are seldom good for anything else.

Pern.—She is patient and does not wish to disobey her father. Besides, Gert is really a very good fellow and quite industrious in his profession.

Henry.—'Tis a pity that she's so patient and doesn't promptly rid herself of him. 'Twould be a great kindness to my master, who, I can assure you, was quite beside himself when he learned that she had been promised to another. However, here he comes himself.

SCENE II.

Leonard, Henry and Pernille.

Leonard.—Henry, with whom are you talking?

Henry.—With the druggist's maid.

Leonard.—Ah, my dear, is it really true that your young mistress is betrothed?

Pern.—Yes, sir, Mr. Leonard, it's true.

Leonard.—My thoughts have been fixed upon her for an entire year, and it was my intention to ask her hand in marriage; but recently, just as I was about to do so, I heard, here and there, that she had been promised to Gert Westphaler. This news was painful to me, partially on her account, since she

must marry this tiresome fellow, whom everyone shuns because of his confounded talk, and painful as well on my own account since I am thereby robbed of her on whom I had set my heart. You know, Henry, how often I have spoken of her.

Henry.—Indeed, I do; and you will recall, too, how often I advised you, sir, to secure her in time, else, said I, you cannot tell who may get her.

Leonard.—I thought because of her youth—

Henry.—Ah, master, she's fifteen years old. Just ask this maid in what profound respect fifteen years holds itself to-day.

Pern.—For my part I'm very sorry, both for Mr. Leonard's sake and that of my young mistress, for I do not doubt that she would be much better off with him. Here she comes, however.

SCENE III.

Leonora, Leonard, Henry and Pernille.

Leonora.—Pernille, you must come in to father. But who are these people to whom you are talking? Oh, I see; that's Mr. Leonard.

Leonard.—Ah! my dear Miss, I cannot see you without being deeply affected.

Leonora.—Why, am I so unsightly?

Leonard.—Quite the contrary; I wish you were displeasing in my eyes.

Leonora.—What a curious wish! I should certainly like to know the reason.

Leonard.—Well, the reason is—but, alas! what would it avail were I to discover it to you. Good-bye, charming maiden. May your life be ever happy!

(Leonard and Henry leave.)

SCENE IV.

Leonora and Pernille.

Leonora.—What does all this talk mean, Pernille?

Pernille.—That means about the same as "Deuce take Gert Westphaler."

Leonora.—Aren't you ashamed of yourself to wish, in my presence, such a fate to my lover?

Pern.—A pretty sort of a lover he is! When he ought to be making love to you he stands here and preaches about State affairs; preaches about State affairs to a young girl! If the man really wants to get married, he'd better be talking about something else and stop that perpetual chattering.

Leonora.—Oh, the chattering will play out after awhile.

Pern.—Don't you believe it; why, I'm sure if you were to sew up his mouth he'd persevere until he'd finally talk through his nostrils.

Leonora.—That's enough; just drop this silly talk and tell me what Mr. Leonard was driving at.

Pern.—When he heard that you were to be married he became quite desperate, for he's been in love with you himself for a year or more.

Leonora.—I'm astonished to think that he permits himself to talk in this way (she sighs).

Pern.—But why this deep sigh?

Leonora.—It's false; I didn't sigh at all (she sighs again).

Pern.—But listen; you just sighed again.

Leonora.—Oh, keep quiet, Pernille. (She leaves, holding her handkerchief to her eyes.)

Pern.—Truly, tears were standing in her eyes. I can easily see that if it depended upon her, she would much rather have this Mr. Leonard than that other fellow. But my master calls, and I must go in.

SCENE V.

Gunilde, alone.

Gunilde.—It's terrible to act as my son has, for an entire month has passed since he promised me to declare himself. He has been to the druggist's house a dozen times or more,

and has had abundant opportunity to declare his love and win the daughter. In fact, the druggist has himself brought the girl into the room; but, as soon as Gert returned home, in response to my question as to whether the marriage had been definitely settled upon, he has always replied, "It will be fixed up to-morrow, for to-day I met a number of people at the druggist's and we fell into such a lengthy argument that there was no time to woo." The druggist, also, is very angry about the matter and asks if my son is purposely trying to provoke him. The marriage, so far as we parents are concerned, is entirely settled upon, and there is nothing lacking but a few words to be spoken to the girl herself, and Gert has solemnly promised to speak them to-day. For this reason, I wish to go to the druggist's first and appease him somewhat; but here he comes.

SCENE VI.

Gunilde and Gilbert.

Gilbert.—(Speaking toward the place from whence he has just come.) Now listen, you clerks; be careful that everything is kept in proper shape 'til the doctors come, for the drug-store is to be inspected by them this afternoon. Though, to be sure, if the Dantzig brandy and the aqua vitæ are good they inquire but little of anything else. Doctor Herrmann has inspected my drug-store in this wise for the last ten years. The only thing he asks is: "Have you any first-class *sai volatile* on hand now? We must try it, my colleague," and then, when seven or eight bottles of Frontignac wine have been emptied the inspection is pronounced satisfactory. (He turns round and sees Gunilde.) Ah, your servant, Madam Gunilde.

Gunilde.—Oh, I'm so glad I met you, I want to have a talk.

Gil.—I know very well what you wish to talk about. I've already said more than a score of times that because of our friendly relations I have forborne, but, upon my honor, I will be vexed by him no longer. You have promised over and over that your son would come and wind up the affair. He

comes, it is true; but he talks and talks always of other things until late in the night. Never in my life have I seen such a wooer. If your son wants my daughter, let him wind up the affair at once.

Gun.—His silence in this matter is not due to coldness or indifference, Mr. Gilbert, he is as deeply in love as any one could possibly be.

Gil.—Why then doesn't he confine his attentions to her instead of preaching all sorts of silly stuff at us. He compelled me to learn who Doctor Arius was. What's that to me? The doctors and barbers with whom I have to do here are quite sufficient. This Doctor Arius is a man who died, I really don't know how many years ago, but long enough to be resurrected. What do I care to learn how many bishops or German electors there are? My drug-store would still stand as secure if not one of these people was in the world.

Gun.—He solemnly promised me that to-day he would settle the marriage question.

Gil.—Very well, then; my daughter shall remain at home. He need but ask for her, for owing to the fact that my drug-store is to be inspected to-day I shall not have an opportunity of speaking to him myself. Good-bye, let your son come at once.

Gun.—Oh see, there is my son now, if you'd like to speak to him——

Gil.—No, I haven't time to talk to him. You simply repeat what I have just said.
(He leaves.)

SCENE VI.

Gunilde and Gert Westphaler.

Gert.—Mother, why did the druggist leave so hastily?

Gunilde.—Now pay attention to what I say, my son. I have again succeeded, though not without considerable trouble, in appeasing him. The good man has an idea that we are trying to provoke him, nor is he without grounds for his displeasure. It is now more than two months since the

marriage was decided upon between us and nothing now hinders its accomplishment except your declaration to her. Because of your confounded chattering, however, which isn't worth two straws anyway, day after day goes fruitlessly by. Do you think that people must know that you took a trip from Hadersleben to Kiel, in how many inns you lodged, or to how many maids in those same inns you made approaches, or how many pipes of tobacco you smoked during the journey? There are people here who have travelled much farther in the world than you. Why, Anders Christenson has been three or four times as far as Bordeaux and Rouen in France; indeed, he has been in Trapezund, or Cattesund, and yet he hasn't nearly so much to tell of his travels as you have of yours.

Gert.—What I relate of my trip to Kiel are no trifles. I don't tell how many mugs of beer I drank or pipes of tobacco I smoked, but other things well worth hearing. Now if you, mother, will kindly give me your attention I'll just relate my trip to you and then you can see for yourself if I talk of trifles.

Gun.—Oh, deuce take your confounded talkativeness! Go, and do what you ought, or frankly admit that you have no desire to do it, so that we may know where we stand. Go, this instant, quickly.

SCENE VIII.

Gert Westphaler and a Drug-clerk.

Gert.—Yes, I must go in and settle this matter once for all. Oh, here's one of the druggist's clerks. Ah! your servant, sir, a word.

Clerk.—Your servant, Mr. Gert; on your way to our house?

Gert.—Yes, I'm to speak to the druggist's daughter. You're one of his clerks, are you not?

Clerk.—Yes.

Gert.—I don't remember to have seen you here.

Clerk.—Probably not, I've been here only a week, but I spent nine years in a drug-store at Hadersleben.

Gert.—Ah! is it possible? You clerked there?

Clerk.—Yes, just as I say. Are you, perchance, acquainted with Hadersleben?

Gert.—Yes, indeed, I'm acquainted there. Once upon a time I travelled from Hadersleben to Kiel, and I shall never forget that trip. One of my travelling companions was a journeyman hatter, a big strong fellow, who lived in Kiel and worked for the best houses there. Every hat I have worn since that time has come from his hands, for he makes them as honestly and strong as any one in our country. *Summa summarum* we travelled together toward Kiel, each with his trade, in order to better himself there; for Kiel is an excellent place for journeymen of all kinds. I know that many of my fellow-workers arrived there with empty pockets and before many years were quite well-fixed. Now the reason for this is that there are not many working people there, and the city folks are quite well-to-do and pay liberally: apart from that, everything is so cheap there. I'll tell you briefly just what eatables cost in my time. In the first place, you could buy a pound of as good pork as any honest man could wish to add to his peas for not more than a Lübschen shilling.

Clerk.—Say, mister, you're going into too many details.

Gert.—And in the second place, you could get a pound of beef for a sechsling.

Clerk.—But that has nothing to do with the trip.

Gert.—And thirdly, for half a firkin of butter you need pay but four Reichsthalers.

Clerk.—Ah! brother, I must tell you frankly that I haven't the patience to listen to all this rigmarole.

Gert.—And fourthly, for a dozen eggs you need pay but a Lübschen shilling.

Clerk.—But what have I got to do with your pork or butter and eggs?

Gert.—And fifthly, for a pot of brandy—but hold, just have a little patience and I'll drop the eatables and tell you about my trip. In the first inn along our way we found a man who looked like a pretty good sort of a fellow; he had

silver buttons on his coat and black satin knickerbockers. He spoke to us in a very friendly way, saying: "Gentlemen, shall we not drink together?" We thanked him for the honor he wished to show us and drank one mug after another in *bona charitate*, until we, *salva venia*, were all rather mellow; then he proposed that we should drink to an eternal friendship with him, so we bowed and scraped and drank to our eternal brotherhood. Meanwhile our guide sat in a corner, laughing all the while. From time to time we asked him: "Comrade, what are you laughing about?" to which he always answered: "Oh, nothing." At last, after our new brother of the eternal friendship had left, we learned that he was the hangman of Schleszwig. Now, my dear Monsieur, I must ask you in all candor if we can be justly blamed for that? For, in the first place—with your kind permission, as I have such a severe cold, I'll move round a little on the other side. (As Gert turns around the clerk slips quietly away.) Now, in the first place, I say that we didn't know, of course (he coughs hoarsely), that it was the hangman of Schleszwig (coughs), and, *posito* (coughs), even had we known it (coughs) we'd have been no worse off than before, for, when you come to think over carefully and justly what an executioner is (coughs), you'll find he's but the consummator of the powers-that-be (coughs and looks round). What's become of the fellow? Where the deuce is that man from Hadersleben? Hello, Monsieur Hadersleben! Hey, Brother Hadersleben! Doesn't it show an utter lack of shame to run away in this manner from an honest man's talk? Truly I shall tell the druggist just what sort of polite clerks he has. This rascal must be one of the *nobles venetiens* of Hadersleben, he is so insolent. I don't know how it is that I have such ill-luck in this city. If I lived anywhere else I could earn considerable money by my eloquence. I doubt if there's a man, not even an enemy, that would say behind my back that I started a conversation and spoke of the weather or marriages or accouchements. My talk relates to high politics and foreign topics—talk that is not to be found in many a book—talk that is more precious than rubies. Should anyone, however, ask: "Why cast your pearls before swine? Why needlessly throw away your precious words upon people who are adorned with asses ears?"

so should I answer: "When I have once begun a discourse, really I must finish it; 'tis my nature." Nor does anything rouse my wrath more than to have anyone listen to the beginning of my discourse and then be unwilling to await its end. But, deuce take it! I'm missing my errand entirely; I must knock.

SCENE IX.

Gert Westphaler and Druggist's Boy.

Gert.—Ah, Jesper, is the druggist in?

Boy.—Yes, he's in all right, but he can't talk to anyone just now. The whole medical profession is here to-day.

Gert.—Why, what are they doing here?

Boy.—They're making an inspection. Master told me, however, that when you came, I was to call his daughter.

Gert.—That's all right, just tell her then that I'm here to pay my respects to her. (The boy leaves.)

SCENE X.

Leonora and Gert Westphaler.

Leonora.—Your servant, sir, Mr. Gert.

Gert.—Most humble servant, honored Miss. I fear that I have come in a rather unpropitious time.

Leonora.—Why so?

Gert.—I hear that you have a visitation to-day.

Leonora.—That doesn't affect me; when mamma is visited, then, of course, it's different, but to-day's visit concerns only the men folks.

Gert.—I heard such a loud racket in one of your rooms, as I came in, that it sounded as if a Reichstag or a Creistag was being held there.

Leonora.—What is a Creistag?

Gert.—I'm delighted to hear you ask this question.

Leonora.—However, I won't trouble you for an answer at this time.

Gert.—On that subject I can give you more and better information than anyone in the city.

Leonora.—I don't doubt it in the least. 'Twould please me better, however, to have your explanations deferred to another time.

Gert.—My dear miss, one must make a careful distinction between a Reichstag and a Creistag.

Leonora.—Oh, I'm quite willing to believe that there's a distinction between a Reich (empire) and a Creis (viz.: Kreide, chalk).

Gert.—No, that hasn't anything to do with it. I must first explain what a Reichstag is. Now a Reichstag is called together by seven "Chur"-princes (electors).

Leonora.—That may all be, but I haven't the honor of being acquainted with any of these gentlemen.

Gert.—There are seven "Chur"-princes in all.

Leonora.—So I have heard.

Gert.—Three ecclesiastical and four secular, consequently there is one more secular than ecclesiastical.

Leonora.—I'm sorry for the ecclesiastics, but is it any fault of mine?

Gert.—The first is the Archbishop of Treves.

Leonora.—Is that so?

Gert.—Then the Archbishop of Cologne follows.

Leonora.—But, Mr. Gert—

Gert.—The third is the Archbishop of Mayence.

Leonora.—Is it possible?

Gert.—As true as I stand before you. What would be the use of my lying about it?

Leonora.—No use whatever, although you could just as easily, so far as I am concerned, lie as tell the truth about these matters. (She starts to leave; Gert prevents her.)

Gert.—These seven "Chur"-princes reign over the fourth monarchy, for up to that time there had been but three, namely, the Phrygian, Elamite and the Mesopotamian, and

this fourth one is the last, for, according to the Sibylline prophecy, should the "Chur"-princes fall, so shall the world fall. Now, on this account, great care is exercised to immediately choose a new "Chur"-prince, as soon as one breathes his last, in order to preserve the world from the final smash up, and it has been so preserved ever since the time of the Kaiser Augustus. This celebrated Kaiser founded the fourth monarchy according to the dictates of the Sibyls upon seven rocks, whereby the aforesaid Kaiser brought about two magnificent things. First, he issued his proclamation whereby he taxed the entire world, and second, he installed the seven "Chur"-princes. The Pope was, indeed, opposed to it and said: "Your Kingly Majesty, why create so many secular princes at once?" But the Kaiser Augustus, who was not the sort of a man that would stand much interference, became quite wrathful and said: "Your Popish Excellency, I will have it so." Whereupon the Pope suddenly fell at the Kaiser's feet and begged his pardon. This humility so touched the Kaiser that he permitted the Pope, then and there, to create sixteen Cardinals. These Cardinals stand on the same footing as the ecclesiastical Counts and Barons, for the Cardinalship falls only to the elder son, never to a daughter. Should a Cardinal die and leave only daughters, the Cardinalship devolves upon the Pope.

Leonora.—Oh, Mr. Gert, I really haven't time to listen any longer. If it is your intention to visit us frequently I should be particularly obliged if you will call when I am not at home, otherwise I must request you to kindly relate the balance of your history to my cat, who understands, I am sure, as much of it as I do. Good-bye. (She leaves.)

Gert.—(Alone.) Well, upon my honor, that was as clear as the sun at noonday. I can plainly see that I'm getting myself disliked in this city through my talk. I swear I'll not open my mouth again; the people of to-day are not worth it. Here I am getting myself disliked for the very thing that ought to make me cherished and honored. I'll go home and tell my mother how insolently I've been treated.

(He leaves.)

SCENE XI.

Gunilde, alone.

Gunilde.—Now I'll go to Mr. Gilbert's and learn how my son has performed his errand. What curious creatures men are! Friendship pleases Gert. He loves the girl and the match is a suitable one. The parents have smoothed the way and yet, notwithstanding that he has called there so many times, he has always returned with his errand unperformed. I sincerely trust this has not been the case to-day. However, I see the girl is coming.

SCENE XII.

Gunilde and Leonora.

Gunilde.—How do you do, my dear daughter-to-be.

Leonora.—That title doesn't fit me at all; it pleases you to mock your humble servant.

Gun.—Mock? why my son intended to call upon you to-day.

Leonora.—He did call, it is true.

Gun.—And performed his errand, I trust.

Leonora.—I cannot deny it. He had resolved, it seems, to call here and give me a course of instruction upon the state of affairs in Germany; upon what rocks its government is founded, etc. He did this so thoroughly that I couldn't possibly find any fault, except with the length of his discourse.

Gun.—And he said nothing of his love?

Leonora.—Not the slightest word. All the time he was talking to me he was on the other side of the Rhine, and as he was getting farther and farther into Germany all the while, I fled, purely for fear that finally I should find myself in Turkey. As I fled I begged him to relate the balance of his history to my cat. But here comes my father. You can learn for yourself just what he thinks of the matter from his own lips.

SCENE XIII.

Gilbert, Gunilde and Leonora.

Gilbert.—Madam, pray pardon me if I speak somewhat bluntly. I have resolved in future to have no further intercourse or association, at my house, with either you or your son. We have no intention to be led around by the nose any longer, nor to permit our house to become the town-talk.

Gunilde.—(Crying.) Alas, Mr. Gilbert, I can't begin to tell you how much my son's peculiar actions grieve me. I must admit that it is his failing to forget everything that he ought to do as soon as he gets started on his old rigmarole. If you except this failing, however, there is more of good than of bad in him. He is godly, a good provider, never drinks to intoxication nor gambles, and is industrious in his profession.

Gil.—I'll accept what you say and, consequently, will permit him to associate with my clerks and address to them his course of instruction. But my daughter is to be left in peace, since it is hardly necessary for her to attend his lectures.

Gun.—Alas! alas! (She falls in a faint.)

Gil.—Oh! the woman is overcome. Run inside, Leonora, and bring out the third bottle on the fourth shelf. (Leonora leaves and quickly returns with a bottle which she holds under Gunilde's nose.)

Gil.—Madam, don't take this so deeply to heart. What does it really matter if your son doesn't get my daughter? He can get married at any time.

Gun.—Ah, Mr. Gilbert, do me the kindness to be patient, just once more, because of slanderous tongues. Believe me, he'll fool you no longer.

Gil.—Well then, rest easy and let him come once more; be sure, however, that he's in earnest this time.

Gun.—Ah, I thank you very much, Mr. Gilbert. Should he provoke you this time, I'll recognize him for a son no longer.

Gil.—Very well, good-bye, till we meet again.

(Gilbert and Leonora leave.)

SCENE XIV.

Gunilde and Gert Westphaler.

Gunilde.—Ah, miserable woman that I am! This son will yet bring me in sorrow to the grave. But here he comes. Oh, you miserable, provoking fellow! I wonder that you dare to show your face to me. However, I ought not to take it so much to heart, for I should have abandoned you to your fate long ago. How did you perform your errand at the druggist's this time?

Gert.—Very well, mother, only the girl was a little too hasty.

Gun.—Which means, of course, that she wouldn't sit still by the hour and listen attentively to your confounded rigma-role, you lubber. (Boxes his ear.) Tell me (boxes his other ear), what did you go to the druggist's for, anyway? Was it that you might chatter about State affairs?

Gert.—The girl asked me what a Creistag in Germany is, therefore I had to enlighten her, and I couldn't do that without describing the "Chur"-princes and letting her know that there are seven of them, namely, three ecclesiastic and four secular. As, for instance, the ecclesiastics are the "Chur"-prince of Cologne——

Gun.—(Boxes his ears again.) There you have a couple for your ecclesiastics as they weigh them out in Cologne. Won't you ever shut that mouth of yours?

Gert.—Oh, mother, don't get so angry at me. Make my peace with the druggist just once more. I won't let my talk with the girl get off the track again, but I'll go straight to the point, so that she'll be entirely satisfied with me.

Gun.—Now listen, son, the anger that I've shown toward you, is really love. I have, unknown to you, again made peace with the druggist. Consequently, you go back, at this very instant, to his house; but, remember, if you perform your errand this time as you have formerly, I'll recognize you no longer for my son. (She leaves.)

Gert.—(Goes to the druggist's house and knocks. Leonora comes out.)

SCENE XV.

Gert Westphaler and Leonora.

Leonora.—Welcome back, my dear Mr. Gert.

Gert.—Your humble servant, my dear miss. I beg your pardon a thousand times for having vexed you with my long speech.

Leonora.—You're already forgiven.

Gert.—I beg you not to misconstrue my actions.

Leonora.—Oh, not at all; your mother has explained matters to my father and to me.

Gert.—I recognize that at times I talk a trifle too much.

Leonora.—Yes, I've noticed that myself.

Gert.—Many construe that into a vice, and yet there are various good, honest people who find great delight in my talk.

Leonora.—Oh, there's nothing particular to say against it, if only one didn't so often choose the wrong time.

Gert.—But have you really forgiven my error from the bottom of your heart?

Leonora.—Yes, from the bottom of my heart.

Gert.—(Kisses her hand.) Permit me this liberty, my dear girl. We people that have travelled, you know, have a little peculiarity, or "fad" as you might term it, of most willingly relating what we have seen and heard in foreign parts in order to show that we are not merely ornaments for the chimney-corner.

Leonora.—Why, have you travelled? Really, I never knew that.

Gert.—My, I should say I have travelled. Once upon a time I travelled from Hadersleben to Kiel, and I shall never forget that trip, etc., etc., etc. (Finally Leonora tries to get away, but Gert holds her.)

Leonora.—Monsieur, if you don't let me go, I'll certainly box your ears. (Tears herself loose and leaves.)

SCENE XVI.

Gert Westphaler, alone.

Gert.—I must admit that I'm given to talking a great deal—a facility in speech I inherit from my father. He never stooped to small-talk, however, nor do I. These good people will feel my loss when I'm once dead and gone, and then they'll be saying: "Deuce take it, but that Gert Westphaler was a better man than we thought him, for since his death we can find no one here that can speak so well of foreign affairs. Would that we could disinter him alive!" As long as one is alive he is but little esteemed, but no sooner dead, they would have him back. Envy is perhaps the principal cause; they see that in company I alone have the floor. Others would gladly speak, but not being able to do so, they are unwilling to listen to me. Why does George Glover hate me so much? Simply because, while he would so gladly stick in his oar, he dares not talk politics in my presence, because he knows that I would immediately fall on his flank, since I understand my *Politica* so much better than he does. I have often noticed that, as soon as I come into his company, he becomes as still as a mouse, hoping thereby to create the impression that he is one of those wise men who speak little that they may think much. That is an old trick of certain blockheads who know nothing, and yet give themselves the air of a Cato, and are silent when in my presence or in the presence of other learned men; but whose thoughts really rise no higher than those of a horse or a sheep. Should I tie my tongue for this reason? No, I would rather be envied than despised. I would rather have people say: "That fellow has a scandalous tongue in his head," than have them say: "That fellow sits there as mute as a mackerel, and as dumb as a fool." But what ought I to do about this affair? I must admit that I went rather deeply into the subject I was talking about to Miss Leonora. Might she not, however, have listened to my tale until I finished it? Ought she to have threatened, on this account, to box my ears? I am convinced that her father will now break off the match. But he'll have

to tell me why. I'll insist upon my rights, and call upon the law of the land to maintain them. (He leaves.)

SCENE XVII.

Gunilde, alone.

Gunilde.—I cannot but believe that this time my son has complied with my instructions and spoken seriously to the girl regarding this marriage which he knows is so dear to my heart. But I see the druggist coming with his daughter. Oh, my anxiety makes me tremble like a leaf—I fear——

SCENE XVIII.

Gunilde, Leonora, Gilbert and Pernille.

Gunilde.—Oh, Mr. Gilbert, where is my son?

Gilbert.—Now listen, I'm not going to find fault with you so hastily this time, Madam, for you're a good woman and in nowise to blame in this matter.

Gun.—Alas! what's the matter now?

Gil.—Your son has again performed his errand in exactly the same manner he did on former occasions. He was not able to get in a word regarding marriage because of his confounded rigmarole about market reports and State affairs.

Gun.—Ah, wretched creature that I am!

Gil.—Don't take it so much to heart, Madam.

Gun.—Will you, then, forgive him this time?

Gil.—Oh, no, Madam. Nevertheless, we can remain good friends. My daughter can get a husband besides him. Mr. Leonard, the distiller in our neighborhood, is deeply in love with her. It isn't necessary for me to force my daughter on any one.

Gun.—I don't doubt that in the least; but, my worthy Mr. Gilbert——

Gil.—But, my worthy Madam Gunilde, please don't bother me any longer with the matter.

Gun.—Truly, I shall die of grief on account of my son; alas! alas!

Gil.—I'm very sorry, indeed, on your account, Madam.

Gun.—'Tis but a trifling fault after all, Mr. Gilbert, that will wear off in time. Apart from that, he's a good fellow, with whom no one can find fault.

Gil.—Good fellow or not, I don't intend to be provoked by him any longer.

Gun.—Ah, Mr. Gilbert, with my eyes filled with tears I beg you to forgive him once more. I assure you that I will not beg for him again. Pray pardon him for the sake of our old friendship.

Gil.—Madam, I cannot bear to see you in such deep trouble. Very well, then, I'll pardon him this time too; but, remember, once for all.

Gun.—I assure you that I shall never again open my lips on his account.

Gil.—At five o'clock to-night let your son come here, where he will find my notary, so that as soon as he has finished his proposal, the marriage contract can be signed. That will put an end to the affair.

Gun.—I'll hasten home and give my son such an overhauling that he'll think it thunders.

SCENE XIX.

Gilbert, Leonora and Pernille.

Gilbert.—Well, Leonora, if he provokes you this time, 'twill be, at least, the last.

Leonora.—(Sighs.)

Gil.—What are you sighing about?

Pernille.—I sigh, too, although it's not me that has to take him. Why shouldn't she sigh? If you had ten or twelve daughters and were forced to marry them off on account of poverty I could understand, but——

Gil.—Now just hold your tongue, miss; it's no affair of yours. I will have it so. Nothing bad can be said of him except this.

Pern.—Yes, he'd be a good enough sort of a man if he wasn't such a big fool.

Gil.—What fault can you find with him, except that he talks too much? And that is the usual failing of barbers.

Pern.—Quite true, but when it comes to talking, this fellow can play first fiddle to all the barbers in the world. To-night your daughter, instead of springing on the bridal couch, will be compelled to listen to a course of lectures. The night will be spent in relating rigmarole from the newspapers, which is certainly no way to treat a bride. I really believe that inside of a year he'll turn into a newspaper himself. All I can say, is, that upon my honor, I shouldn't be willing to accept him, unless I had lost my ears or was injured to such an extent that he might chatter away without disturbing my peace.

Gil.—Well, reasoning about it won't help the matter now. I've promised his mother and I'll stick to my word. (All leave.)

SCENE XX.

Gert Westphaler and a Lawyer.

Gert.—Then you give me your word of honor that you would advise me to bring suit against the druggist?

Lawyer.—My dear sir, never in my life have I advised any one not to bring suit. Were I to do so, I should understand my profession very badly. Likewise, he must indeed be a poor barber-surgeon who did not advise bleeding.

Gert.—But is it your opinion that I shall win?

Lawyer.—What! would you bring suit simply to win? What an idea!

Gert.—What, then, would I bring suit for?

Lawyer.—My dear sir, you may be a very good barber-surgeon, but you understand the law very badly. Must not an invalid, although he may know to a certainty that he cannot be cured, nevertheless, take medicine? He must, indeed, in order that people may not say to his discredit that he died like a beast, without the aid of a doctor. 'Tis just the same when one fails to bring suit. Then people say: "The lazy-bones, the miser that don't insist upon his rights." On the

other hand, should the suit be lost with honor, then he can say: "My conscience is clear. I have done all that I could." Besides, your case is of such a character that you cannot lose.

Gert.—But really you haven't yet heard what my case consists of.

Lawyer.—Why, you told me it was against a druggist.

Gert.—Yes, so it is.

Lawyer.—That's sufficient, you'll win, here's my hand on it. It requires only my slightest skill to settle a druggist, and be it understood that even if you lose, I promise that you shall lose with honor. What are the facts of your case?

Gert.—My mother and the druggist have agreed upon the marriage between his daughter and me. To-day I called at their house to propose. Before I'd gotten round to popping the question, however, I fell into another line of talk which had, indeed, happened on some previous occasions. This time she became very impatient and threatened to box my ears.

Lawyer.—If you permit that to pass unnoticed, then you are indeed a clown. Just rely on me as on an honest man. I just wish that your life was in question, that you had already been sentenced to be hung, so that I might show with what zeal I should conduct your case.

Gert.—Oh, no, thank you. The people of this town accuse me of talking too much. But it's no small-talk or idle gossip that I indulge in. I speak of State affairs, and tell news that those who hear ought to pay me well for the privilege. But these people think of nothing but eating and drinking and playing cards. What a contrast to my fatherland, West-phalla, whose praises I must sound! My father told me that there, in every street, are to be found groups of talkers, and that no one thought of leaving until he had become hoarse.

Lawyer.—Speech is the very thing that differentiates us from the beasts. But everything has its time. If one would woo, one should be willing for the moment to drop all other kinds of talk.

Gert.—True enough; often I've been drawn into these subjects quite against my will. In fact, 'tis largely due to the girl herself, who led me on once by asking what a Creistag in

Germany is, and, another time by inquiring of my trip to Kiel. Both of these questions, however, I answered at too great a length, and with too much detail—according to the girl's opinion. But such subjects require time and detail, eh?

Lawyer.—There's not very much to be said of such a short journey as that to Kiel.

Gert.—Not much to say? Oh, yes, indeed. That was, I assure you, a remarkable trip. If I remember rightly, it was just three years ago on the twentieth of February that I left Hadersleben.

Lawyer.—Really, I don't care to hear about it. I've been over the route several times myself.

Gert.—No, when I come to think it over it was on the nineteenth of February.

Lawyer.—This isn't the time to talk of that. We'd better talk of the law-suit.

Gert.—One of my travelling companions was a journeyman hatter—

Lawyer.—You must be sure to have the papers served on the druggist before the sun goes down to night.

Gert.—No, just hear me first: This journeyman hatter was a big strong fellow who lived in Kiel and worked for the best houses there. Every hat I have worn since that time has come from his hands, etc., etc., etc.

Lawyer.—The complaint should be drawn up somewhat in this fashion: (While Gert is relating his journey the lawyer continues:) Whereas, Mr. Gilbert, a druggist of this city, after careful consideration has willingly accepted me as the husband-to-be for his daughter; whereas the aforesaid daughter has driven me from her home with contemptuous language and threats; whereas they now seek to withdraw from this marriage without sufficient cause; whereas, it is well known to the whole city that she has been promised to me in marriage, and, whereas, I cannot permit my reputation and feelings to be so lightly made sport of, I intend to assert my rights and to call upon the authorities to maintain them—otherwise should such actions be permitted to become a custom, each and every woman might sport with the reputation of any honest man as she pleased—

Gert.—(Gert, who has been talking all the while, now tries, by placing his hand over the lawyer's mouth, to close it. The lawyer boxes Gert's ears. They come to blows and Gert drives the lawyer away.)

SCENE XXI.

Gunilde and Gert Westphaler.

Gunilde.—What the mischief does all this noise mean? I thought that when I met you I should find you weeping for your sins, but instead of that, you're fighting?

Gert.—Oh, mother you would pity me if you but knew my sad fate.

Gun.—Your sad fate? You'd better say your sad behavior. I've already heard how you acted on this last trip to the druggist's.

Gert.—The girl insolently drove me away and besides threatened to box my ears.

Gun.—What you really deserved was to be kicked out of the house.

Gert.—Whereupon I asked a lawyer to advise me what to do in the matter. He was such a fool, however, that I couldn't get a word in edgewise.

Gun.—Oh, you rascal, would you now bring a suit against these good, honest people whom you have so often provoked?

Gert.—What else should I do? I'm entirely disheartened.

Gun.—You should go and hang yourself; you're not worthy to live.

Gert.—Alas, is there no longer any way to appease the druggist?

Gun.—No; you cannot hope to appease either him or me.

Gert.—Well then mother, good-bye; you shall see me no more.

Gun.—(Aside.) I mustn't try him any longer. (To Gert.) Where are you going?

Gert.—Oh, I'm quite desperate.

Gun.—Now, listen; once more I have made your peace with the druggist, although I had a great deal of trouble to do it.

Gert.—Oh, dearest mother, is it indeed true?

Gun.—Yes; but be assured that this is the very last time. The druggist has engaged his notary to be there at the same time, so that, if you perform your errand properly and receive the girl's consent, the marriage contract can be concluded without further delay.

Gert.—My dear mother, I promise you that I shall watch myself carefully.

Gun.—You may do as you like; I shall trouble myself no further in the matter. Meanwhile come along with me.

SCENE XXII.

Leonard and Henry.

Leonard.—Is that sufficient, simply for you to have seen her maid, in order to learn how matters now stand and if the marriage is really to take place?

Henry.—What benefit would it be to you if you did know it?

Leonard.—Why, it's quite natural that one should wish to know about a matter upon which his entire happiness depends. Therefore, go at once to the druggist's, just as if you had business there, and be sure that you bring the maid out here to me. Alas! alas! this trouble I might so easily have prevented. This is what procrastination does for a man. If I only had wooed her without delay when I first set my affections upon her, she might be mine at this moment. I cannot possibly believe that she has given her heart to such a fellow. What she does, is done simply to please her father. Be that as it may, 'tis all the same to my unhappiness, since I must do without her. But here comes Henry with the maid.

SCENE XXIII.

Leonard, Henry and Pernille.

Leonard.—Ah, dear Pernille, what news have you? Is it to be, or not to be?

Pernille.—Well, sir, I can assure you that my mistress feels as badly about it as you do. Gert Westphaler has been here again and with his confounded, tiresome talk made Leonora so provoked that it nearly breaks her heart to think she must marry such a man. My master, too, became very angry and was strongly tempted to break the engagement, particularly as he had heard that you would like to have his daughter. Finally, however, he permitted himself to be persuaded by the mother's sighs and tears to give Gert another chance at five o'clock to night; at which hour the notary also is to be here, so that if Gert at last acts in a manly way, the marriage contract may be concluded.

Leonard.—But does the girl agree to that?

Pern.—She dare not oppose her father, for he's a stern man. She has opened her heart, however, to an uncle, Mr. Gotthard, who pities her and has promised to draw Gert into talking once more upon affairs of State. Now you must be sure to be here too, so that when this happens you can beg for Leonora's hand as soon as her father becomes angry.

Leonard.—But I fear that he'll watch himself carefully this time.

Pern.—Should he do that, my mistress proposes, when she perceives that he is beginning to woo in earnest, to pretend to be sick and thereby cause a postponement of the marriage and gain time to invent other obstacles. I whispered to her that you were out here, and I believe she's coming out. See, there she comes already, with her uncle.

SCENE XXIV.

Leonard, Henry, Pernille, Leonora and Gotthard.

Leonard.—My dear girl, your maid has very considerably lightened my heart by telling me that you loathe the very sight of Gert Westphaler.

Leonora.—That is true, my dear Mr. Leonard, but I have a very stern father to deal with you know.

Leonard.—I hope, however, my dear, that if you take a firm stand, your father will not force you to obey.

Leonora.—I would prefer not to run the risk of subjecting myself to my father's anger, before I have seen if matters won't take another turn of themselves. Should this not happen, then I must disobey.

Gotthard.—Now just keep quiet, youngsters. Let Gert come, and you, Mr. Leonard, be sure also to be here at 5 o'clock. It's nearly that time now. I hope to succeed in drawing forth one of the barber's long-winded speeches to his irretrievable loss, and if this should not succeed we'll invent other methods. I freely admit that this proposed marriage has never pleased me, and that I would much rather see my niece in Mr. Leonard's arms. My brother, himself, desires it also, and nothing but his promise holds him back. Meanwhile, you leave for a time, Mr. Leonard, and rely upon me. The rest of us will go in.

SCENE XXV.

Gert Westphaler, alone.

Gert.—Now it all depends upon you, Gert Westphaler, to prove that you're a man, or to remain a clown all your life. Still, I know very well that I can refrain from intellectual discourse for an hour. (He strikes himself on the mouth.) Now listen, Monsieur Mouth; you'll catch it with a vengeance if, this afternoon, you dare to speak of anything whatsoever except briefly of my love. When I think over the matter seriously, I realize how shocking it is that one should be hated simply because he discusses intellectual subjects. But I must avoid them now, since all my happiness depends upon it. I hope to stand firm upon this decision, consequently I mustn't permit any one to drag me into a discourse, for I must acknowledge that when any one asks a question regarding a subject on which I am fully informed, it is my greatest delight to enlighten him. But I must practise this afternoon somewhat, so that I can more readily stand the test. Oh, here comes the notary, he's just in time.

SCENE XXVI.

Gert Westphaler and the Notary.

Notary.—Your servant, Mr. Gert. I'm called here to-day on your account.

Gert.—So I understand, Notary. I've been here a number of times before, but didn't accomplish anything.

Notary.—How is that?

Gert.—Well you know I'm rather fond of reading curious books and then relating what I have read therein. On various occasions in this house I have fallen into some such topics—though never without reason—when I ought to have been speaking of our marriage. I hope, however, to do better this time.

Notary.—I'm sure you can control your mouth for an hour.

Gert.—Notary, won't you be kind enough to try me? Just act as if you were Leonora and ask questions regarding some one or other of these curious subjects, to see if I can be steadfast. It is so difficult for me to bury my talent when anyone gives me a chance to talk.

Notary.—Quite willingly. Now, you know, I'm the young lady.

Gert.—Your most humble servant, my dear Miss.

Notary.—Your servant, sir, Mr. Gert.

Gert.—On this occasion, I appear trembling before you.

Notary.—Why so?

Gert.—Because I made you so angry recently by my long speeches.

Notary.—Oh that doesn't matter. You always speak well on any subject. What's new, Mr. Gert?

Gert.—Nothing, my dear Miss.

Notary.—Haven't you read the newspapers?

Gert.—Oh, yes, I've read them.

Notary.—Isn't there anything new in them?

Gert.—Nothing except that—No, upon my honor I haven't read a newspaper since I went travelling.

Notary.—Why, have you travelled?

Gert.—Once upon a time I travelled from Hadersleben to Kiel, and I shall never forget this trip. One of my travelling companions was a journeyman hatter— (He slaps himself on the mouth.) Won't you shut up you wretch?

Notary.—What were you going to say about that hatter?

Gert.—Nothing, except that he's a fellow not worth talking about.

Notary.—You did that well enough.

Gert.—Oh, yes, I believe I can stick to it now. Will you kindly go in, Notary and tell them that I'm here?

Notary.—(Goes in.)

Gert.—(Meanwhile walks to and fro talking to himself and occasionally slapping himself on the mouth.)

SCENE XXVII.

Gert Westphaler, Gotthard, Leonora, Pernille and the Notary.

Gert.—Your most humble servant, my dear Miss.

Leonora.—Your servant, sir.

Gert.—On this occasion I appear trembling before you.

Leonora.—Do you, indeed?

Gert.—I humbly beg pardon for my behavior on former occasions.

Leonora.—Since my father has forgiven you, I must forgive you, also.

Gert.—I hope, however, that you forgive me on your own account, from the bottom of your heart.

Leonora.—I have never disobeyed my father.

Gert.—Your father, as well as you, had good cause to be provoked at my conduct.

Leonora.—There's considerable truth in that.

Gert.—But that is my only fault, Miss. Otherwise, I look after my business carefully and am always sober.

Leonora.—That's true.

Gert.—I shall not attempt to exculpate my behavior toward you, but shall frankly recognize it as a misdemeanor, notwithstanding that in many places it would be regarded as something entirely proper.

Leonora.—That may be.

Gotthard.—These good folks here, however, are rather too delicate. As a matter of fact, I wish that I could have Mr. Gert constantly with me, because I am very fond of good talk, and I understand that his is quite out of the ordinary.

Gert.—Please accept my thanks for your good opinion.

Gotthard.—But what do people principally complain of? That you talk nonsense?

Gert.—No one can accuse me of that; I talk only on intellectual and unusual subjects.

Pern.—I can inform you on this point, Uncle Gotthard. Mr. Gert is a man that has travelled, and to do so has endured many hardships and spent a lot of good money. Now, the only use of such travels is to be able, when one has returned home, to relate his adventures.

Gotthard.—So you have travelled, too, eh, Mr. Gert?

Gert.—No, not particularly.

Pern.—Yet, it seems to me, I have heard that you took a trip to Kiel.

Gert.—Yes, that's true. Some years ago I travelled from Hadersleben to Kiel, and I shall never forget that trip. One of my travelling companions was—— (He suddenly stops and holds his handkerchief up to his mouth.)

Gotthard.—Who was your travelling companion?

Gert.—(Still holding the handkerchief before his mouth.) Nobody.

Gotthard.—Well, I can't understand, Mr. Gert, why people should get angry at you simply because you relate travels and matters of history.

Pern.—Nor I, either.

Gotthard.—And I shall reprimand my brother for sticking at such a trifle.

Gert.—Much obliged, but, pray, pardon me, as I must now talk to Miss Leonora.

Gotthard.—There are certain things in the newspapers, Pernille, that I should be willing to pay considerable money to be enlightened upon. I have been reading of Tories and Whigs in England, and my knowledge concerning them is not at all clear, nor is there anyone in the whole city who can furnish me with this information.

Gert.—(About to woo the girl, pricks up his ears.) I could furnish that information, if I only had time.

Gotthard.—I doubt very much if there's anyone in the city that can give me this information.

Gert.—Why, I've got that all at my finger's ends. If I wasn't afraid of talking——

Gotthard.—I know a little about the matter, myself; simply that it was the Tories that cut off King James' head.

Gert.—Oh, you're mistaken, sir. It's quite different. I'll enlighten you, after a while, but first I must——

Gotthard.—Ha! ha! ha! I can see, already, that you don't understand the matter clearly yourself. It was the Tories that killed the king. That I know. Would that I were as sure of the rest!

Gert.—No, sir, that isn't so. No, no. There are four prominent parties in England, namely, the Tories, the Whigs, the Mannistens and the Anabaptists.

Pern.—(Low.) Now we've won the game. I'll go and get my master and Mr. Leonard.

Gert.—(To Gotthard.) The Tories are the most celebrated, and always fought for the king against the Whigs, who were led by Cromwell. This Cromwell, who is called Massaniello in Latin, was the son of a butcher, but he succeeded so well that he became a Knight of the Garter and *Generalissimus* upon land and sea, for he had a long head. Just think, Mr. Gotthard, he was so able that he could hold audiences, read, write and dictate four letters at one and the same time. That sounds incredible, but it is as true as I am standing before you.

SCENE XXVIII.

Gert Westphaler, Gotthard, Leonora and the Notary. A little later, Gilbert, Leonard and Pernille, who come in while Gert is talking to Gotthard. Meanwhile, too, Leonard is married at one side of the stage to Leonora.

Gert.—(To Gotthard.) On account of his great ability, King James raised him from one place of distinction to another. When the Archbishopric of Canterbury was vacant, Cromwell recommended his brother-in-law. As the king, however, gave it to a certain Fairfax, Cromwell became enraged, and, gathering together an army composed of Whigs, Mannistens and Anabaptists, rebelled against the king, conquered and took him prisoner in a great battle, and at night had his head cut off. This gave the Whigs the upper hand. The Tories were suppressed and Cromwell was proclaimed Protector of England. After he had reigned some years, however, King James' son came back, joined forces with the Tories, whipped the Whigs several times and at last succeeded in catching my good Mr. Cromwell, whom he had torn apart by four horses. This made the Tories again masters of the situation, and they determined to wholly exterminate the Whigs and their allies, the Mannistens and the Anabaptists. As there were so many of them, however, the Tories changed their minds and forbade their enemies, under penalty of death, to have any weapons in their houses. This is the cause of the hatred between the Tories and the Whigs, and the reason why the former can always lead the latter by the nose—— But, great heavens! here I stand, chattering away. Where is Miss Leonora?

Pernille.—Oh, she's all through. She was married to this young gentleman while you were in England, Mr. Gert.

Gert.—What! Mr. Gilbert, is that true?

Gilbert.—Yes, sir. I have kept my word and permitted you another opportunity; as I saw, however, that nothing could be done with you, I gave my daughter in marriage to this honest young fellow, who, by the way, has desired to marry her for some time.

Gert.—May ill luck be upon the heads of all that drew me into this talk! Ah, Mr. Gilbert, can't it be altered?

Gil.—No; won't you kindly go home, now, and pay your compliments to your mother? You can get nothing else here, Mr. Gert, unless you would like to marry my maid, Pernille.

Pern.—Phew! I wouldn't have him. Talk alone wouldn't satisfy me.

Gert.—But, Mr. Gilbert—

Gil.—But, Mr. Gert, there is no help for it now; the marriage contract is signed and finished.

Gert.—Oh, I shall remain no longer in this city, but shall travel to some place where learning is more highly appreciated.

Gil.—Then permit me to wish you a pleasant journey.

A GAUNTLET

BEING THE NORWEGIAN DRAMA

EN HANSKE

BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSEN

Translated into English by

OSMAN EDWARDS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

RIES.

MRS. RIES.

SVAVA RIES, *their daughter*

CHRISTENSEN.

MRS. CHRISTENSEN.

ALF. CHRISTENSEN, *their son.*

HOFF.

MARIE, *servant in Ries' house.*

PETER.

HANNA, KAMMA, FREDERIKE, *and three other
young girls.*

Action takes place in Ries' House.

ACT I.

A tastefully arranged music-room. In the background, open doors, leading into a park; on either side of the doors, windows; busts on the intervening walls. On the right are windows; on the left two doors, of which the first leads into Ries' room; between the doors, rather forward, a piano: in front of it a music-stool. In the foreground, on both sides, sofas; in front of the right-hand sofa a small table, chairs, a music-cabinet between the windows on the right, etc.

SCENE I.

Mrs. Ries; immediately after, Ries. Mrs. Ries is seated on the right-hand sofa, with her face turned to the park, a magazine in her hand, which she reads from time to time during the following scene. Ries enters from his room. He is in his shirt sleeves, and is fastening his collar.

Ries.—I haven't seen Svava yet.

Mrs. Ries.—Svava has gone out.

Ries.—Gone out?

Mrs. Ries.—To the baths.

Ries.—Oh!

Mrs. Ries.—Perhaps I can help you?

Ries.—Oh, dear no! Thanks all the same! These new shirts give one no end of trouble. I bought them in Paris.

Mrs. Ries.—Yes,—a whole dozen, wasn't it?

Ries.—And a half. When did you come home last night? I did not see you leave.

Mrs. Ries.—No, you were playing cards; we did not wish to disturb you. About one o'clock, I should think. And you?

Ries.—Not much before half-past two. What a large party it was!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes; but not on a luxurious scale; rather stingy, I thought, for a betrothal-party.

Ries.—I am told that was Alf's wish.

Mrs. Ries.—Alf is opposed to luxury. Tell me, how do you like him?

Ries.—Very much. There can't be two opinions about him. Do you know, I'm racking my brains over a problem?

Mrs. Ries.—It must be very complicated.

Ries.—To be sure, to be sure! So it is. This collar is simply. . . . There! at last! What I'm puzzled by is our dear girl's character.

Mrs. Ries.—Svava's character?

Ries.—Yes; I'm wondering what traits she has from you, and what from me; or, rather, what traits she inherits from your family, and what from mine, and so forth. Svava is a remarkable girl.

Mrs. Ries.—She is, indeed.

Ries.—Taken as a whole, she is neither you nor I, nor even a combination of both.

Mrs. Ries.—No, Svava is something more.

Ries.—Yes: ever so much more. What do you say?

Mrs. Ries.—Nothing. Only Svava is like my mother.

Ries.—Well, I must say! Svava's quiet, pleasant disposition—what are you dreaming of?

Mrs. Ries.—Svava can be passionate enough.

Ries.—She never sets convention at defiance, as your mother did.

Mrs. Ries.—You never understood my mother. But I dare say they are different in many things.

Ries.—I should think they were! Now, do you see that I was right to reason with her ever since she was quite little? Do you see that, now?—you objected at the time.

Mrs. Ries.—I objected to your perpetually plaguing her—there was no end to it—first one thing, then another.

Ries.—Yes, but the result, my love? the result?

Mrs. Ries.—Well, you surely won't say your arguments made Svava what she is?

Ries.—Not only the arguments—but the arguments had a great deal to do with it! Did you notice her yesterday? She has plenty of *savoir vivre*. What?

Mrs. Ries.—Surely, that is not what we prize most in Svava?

Ries.—No, no! On the steamboat a man asked me if I were related to the Miss Ries who founded the Orphanage here. Yes, I said, I had the honor to be her father. You should have seen the fellow then! I was quite touched!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes,—the Orphanage has been a success from the first.

Ries.—Was it through the Orphanage that she became engaged?

Mrs. Ries.—You had better ask Svava.

Ries.—But you're not noticing me at all—my new suit?

Mrs. Ries.—Indeed I am!

Ries.—Haven't you a word of admiration? The tout ensemble—a harmony in color, eh?—down to the very shoes! And the pocket-handkerchief to match!

Mrs. Ries.—How old are you, Ries?

Ries.—Hush! hush! Well, how old do you suppose people would take me for?

Mrs. Ries.—For forty, of course.

Ries.—"Of course?" As if it were so self-evident! Let me tell you, this suit is a sort of Festal Overture, composed in Cologne directly I received the telegram about Svava's engagement. Think of that!—in Cologne! not ten hours' journey from Paris! But I couldn't wait ten hours—I was so impressed with my own importance, when I thought that my daughter was about to marry into the richest family in the country.

Mrs. Ries.—Did you only buy that suit?

Ries.—What a question! Wait till my trunks come from the Custom House!

Mrs. Ries.—Ah! then it will be our turn, I suppose!

Ries.—Your turn? Very fortunate for papa—wasn't it?—to be on his way to Paris at the critical moment!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes: and you nearly missed the party altogether.

Ries.—Oh! but that was splendid—as it turned out—the steamer being so late—for suddenly—as if a magician had waved his wand,—there was I in the middle of a fête champêtre! A party in honor of my own, my only daughter—where, naturally, I had a most flattering reception. Never in my life had I been so fêted before.

Mrs. Ries.—Whom did you play cards with?

Ries.—Can you believe it? I made up a rubber with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? In other words, with our host, the Minister of State, and my brother, the Director-General. It's an exceptional honor for a man to lose his money to such distinguished persons,—for I invariably lose. What's that you're reading?

Mrs. Ries.—The Fortnightly.

Ries.—Has there been anything in the last number or two while I was away?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, here is an article on the very subject we've been discussing,—hereditary transmission.

Ries.—Do you know this tune. There's a rage for it just now. I heard it all over Germany. I'll fetch the music before I forget.

SCENE II.

The same. Svava enters by second door on the left.

Ries.—Good morning, my dear girl, good morning! I've scarcely had a chance of saying "How do you do?" yet. I couldn't get near you at the party.

Svava.—Why were you so long returning from abroad?

Ries.—Why don't people give notice when they intend to be engaged?

Svava.—Because they know nothing about it themselves until it happens. Good morning again, mother!

Mrs. Ries.—Ah! how fresh and sweet you are! You went into the woods after your bath?

Svava.—Yes, and on my way home I met Alf, who wished me good morning. He'll be here in a minute. (To Ries.) And do you know what I've seen? Do you know what vessels are in the harbor?

Ries.—Aha! have they arrived at last? My two large yachts?

Svava.—Yes, they're close to the bridge! The deck is like the floor of a ball-room.

Ries.—Don't you think one might dance on it?

Svava.—What a splendid idea! No one but you thinks of such things! Fancy! two large boats side by side, with one deck laid over both, and an awning above—

Ries.—And in front a steam tug with a band on board, and then out to the fiord! Hurrah!

Svava.—Every one I've spoken to means to have an awfully jolly time to-morrow. As for me, I feel as excited as a child.

Ries.—To tell the truth—which one should always do—I had quite given up all idea of ever seeing our "little old maid" so happy.

Svava.—Yes, indeed! so had I.

Ries.—Until this prince came?

Svava.—Until this prince came. He was a long time coming.

Ries.—Was he? And did you have to wait all that time?

Svava.—No, certainly not. I never gave him a thought.

Ries.—That sounds mysterious.

Svava.—Yes, it is mysterious how two people, who have known one another from childhood, without giving each other a thought, suddenly—for that is how it was—became totally different. Since one particular moment, Alf hasn't seemed the same person to me.

Ries.—While of course, to the rest of the world he is unchanged?

Svava.—I hope so.

Ries.—Anyhow, he is much livelier—I can see that.

Svava.—Yes, I saw you laughing together yesterday. What were you laughing at?

Ries.—Can't you guess? At the lady who had the place of honor next his mother.

Svava and Mrs. Ries.—Ah! "the Dragon!"

Ries.—Yes. Were they making fun of any one else?

Mrs. Ries.—To me she is the most repulsive person in the world, with her knitting-basket, her pug, and her mischievous tongue.

Ries.—Oh! but when you're the richest member of the family, and an old maid, people only think you original. We laughed at everything she said, and thought it very witty.

Mrs. Ries.—Well, there was a limit to my patience—I came away.

Ries.—Yes, I noticed that. You belong to a different cult. Those who worship the Golden Calf have a hard time of it. No one is so dependent as the rich.

Mrs. Ries.—(To *Svava.*) But what actually passed between you and her?

Ries.—Between you and "the Dragon?" Was anything the matter?

Svava.—She was very kind; she is always kind to me.

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, but you left her rather abruptly. She must have said something?

Ries.—About me?

Svava.—If you must know, she said something disagreeable about Alf.

Ries.—About Alf.

Svava.—"Disagreeable" is not the right word, perhaps. She said, "If at any time you want to know anything about your fiancé, just come to me."

Ries.—She's a troll! a wicked troll; for there are good trolls too. And, talking of them, let me congratulate you on

your new morning dress. Under the circumstances it is really stylish.

Svava.—Under the circumstances? Does that mean, considering you could not be with me to choose it?

Ries.—Yes: for I should never have chosen this trimming—though, under the circumstances, it's not so bad. And the cut? Dear me! Just wait till my trunks come!

Svava.—Surprises?

Ries.—Splendid surprises! Stop! I have something here as it is.

Svava.—He's very restless, mamma,—more than usual. Don't you notice it?

Mrs. Ries.—He's so pleased, my child! So delighted to be home again—

Svava.—But there's always something so gentle and winning about papa, and he seems to be so considerate of us all. But, by the way, do you know what the Minister of State said about him yesterday?

Ries.—What a man of such high position says must be worth hearing.

Svava.—"Miss Ries, your father is still our man of fashion—par excellence!"

Ries.—Ah, son excellence a bien dit! But I can tell you something better than that. You shall make your father décoré—

Svava.—I?

Ries.—Yes, who else? Already the Government has been of use to me more than once in various business transactions:—but this time I shall accept the order of St. Olaf.

Svava.—I congratulate you!

Ries.—"When it pours on the pastor, it rains on the clerk," you know. As father-in-law of our great man—

Svava.—You are really so uncommonly modest in your new capacity.

Ries.—Am I not?—And now I will appear in the character of a modest exhibitor of elegant costumes—or rather, of designs for costumes—a still more modest rôle!

Svava.—Oh no, papa! Not now!

Mrs. Ries.—Don't let us begin with them till the afternoon!

Ries.—Really, any one would believe I was the only woman in the house! Well, as you will. For I have another proposal in two parts.—Part 1: Let's sit down!

Svava.—We will.

Ries.—Now that papa has come home, tell him exactly how it all happened. Explain that mystery, you know!

Svava.—Oh! indeed! No, you must excuse me. I can't tell you!

Ries.—Not with its tender details! Good heavens! Who would be so brutal as to ask? Before you have been engaged a month! No: I only meant how you came to know each other.

Svava.—Oh! for that I have to thank our precious Orphanage.

Ries.—Your precious Orphanage, you mean?

Svava.—No: we have more than a hundred girls interested in it now.

Ries.—Well, go on: so he came with a subscription?

Svava.—Yes: with several.

Ries.—Aha!

Svava.—One day we happened to speak of luxury. We thought it so much better to spend time and money in a good cause than on luxury.

Ries.—Well, but what do you mean exactly by "luxury?"

Svava.—We didn't define it, but I said that I considered luxury immoral.

Ries.—Immoral?—luxury?

Svava.—Yes: I know that is not your view, but it is mine.

Ries.—Your mother's, you mean, and your grandmother's.

Svava.—Quite so: but mine too—if you have no objection?

Ries.—Heaven forbid!

Svava.—I was telling him of something we saw in America—you, mother, and I—don't you remember? We were

at a temperance meeting, and saw some ladies drive up, who came to support Moderation! Those ladies—well, we didn't know the amount of their fortunes, but to judge from their horses, toilets, and jewels—especially jewels—they must have been worth——

Ries.—Many thousand dollars!

Svava.—And that is just as much one form of excess as drunkenness is another.

Ries.—Well, and what then?

Svava.—Ah! you shrug your shoulders. Alf didn't shrug his. He began to tell me of his experiences . . . in the large towns.

Ries.—His experiences?

Svava.—Yes: of the gulf between rich and poor, between boundless want and shameless luxury.

Ries.—Really! . . . I thought . . . Well, go on!

Svava.—He didn't sit unconcerned, trimming his nails——

Ries.—I beg your pardon!

Svava.—Pray, don't disturb yourself! No; he prophesied a social revolution, and spoke with the utmost fervor. Then he explained his opinions about private property. It was all so unexpected, so novel to me. You should have seen how noble, how beautiful he looked!

Ries.—Really? beautiful?

Svava.—Yes: at least I thought so. And so did mother. Didn't you?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, dear.

Ries.—Mothers are always in love with their daughters' accepted suitors! But that soon passes off, when they become sons-in-law.

Svava.—Is that your experience?

Ries.—That is my experience. So Alf Christensen has grown beautiful? I suppose I must agree with you?

Svava.—As he stood there,—steadfast, frank, and pure—for he must be that, too!

Ries.—What do you mean by "pure," my dear girl?

Svava.—I mean what the word means.

Ries.—Exactly: what does it mean?

Svava.—Well, it means, what I hope any one would understand by it when applied to myself.

Ries.—What?—The word has the same meaning to you—neither more nor less—whether used of a man or a woman?

Svava.—Yes, of course.

Ries.—And you imagine that a son of Christensen——?

Svava.—Father, you hurt me!

Ries.—How can Alf's being his father's son hurt you?

Svava.—In this point he is not his father's son! I am not deceived in him!

Mrs. Ries.—I'm just reading about inherited qualities. He need not be an exact copy of his father.

Ries.—Well, well, as you will! I fight shy of all your air-spun theories. They never carry you any further.

Svava.—What do you mean?

Ries.—Don't be so excited! Come and sit down! Besides, how can you know?

Svava.—How can I know——? What?

Ries.—Why, in each particular case——?

Svava.—How do I know if a man, with whom I associate, is a man or a brute?

Ries.—Ah! There we have it. You may be mistaken, my dear Svava. Come and sit down!

Svava.—No; I am no more mistaken in him than I am in you, papa, when you tease me with your horrible principles. For, in spite of all you say, you are the most refined and delicate . . .

Mrs. Ries.—Are you going to keep on that dress, my child? Won't you change it before Alf comes?

Svava.—No, mother, it's no use trying to turn the subject! Too many of my girl friends have repeated the old story of Beauty and the Beast with this difference.—In their case the lover . . . began by being a Fairy Prince, but when they awoke from their dream he was transformed into a beast. I won't have anything like that! I won't make that mistake.

Mrs. Ries.—Well, you needn't speak so vehemently. Alf is an honorable young man.

Svava.—Yes, he is. But I have come across so many shocking cases. And only the other day there was that affair of Helga Holm!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, that was dreadful.

Ries.—What was that?

Svava.—Haven't you heard?

Ries.—No.

Svava.—They are separated.

Ries.—The Holms?

Svava.—For unfaithfulness. She discovered her husband——

Ries.—The devil! Recently?

Svava.—Quite recently.

Ries.—Hm! Well, well!

Svava.—And now I will tell you something, which I have never spoken of before. Do you know that once—long ago—I was very nearly engaged?

Ries and Mrs. Ries.—(Rising.) You, Svava?

Svava.—Yes. I won't say to whom! I was very, very young, and he professed—oh! the noblest principles, the highest aims! In this respect he was exactly the opposite of papa. To say I loved him would be too little. I worshipped him! But you must excuse my telling you what I discovered, and how. It was at the time when you all believed I was——

Mrs. Ries.—Consumptive?

Ries.—Was it then?

(*Svava nods.*)

Mrs. Ries.—And you never told me a word?

Svava.—Well, it's all over now! But one thing is quite certain; when a woman has once had such an experience, she will not let herself be deceived twice. (*Ries has gone into his room.*)

Mrs. Ries.—Perhaps it was for your happiness, after all.

Svava.—Yes, I am convinced of that! Well! it's all over now! But my sufferings were not entirely over until I found Alf. Where is papa?

Mrs. Ries.—Papa? Here he comes. (Ries comes out, drawing on a glove.)

Ries.—Now, children, I must go to the Custom House to see after my trunks. (Kisses Svava.) Good-bye, my dear girl. You have made us very happy, very happy! But some of your ideas . . . well, well! Good-bye! (Going off.)

Mrs. Ries.—Good-bye!

Ries.—(Coming back.) Did you notice that tune I was playing just now? In Germany I heard it everywhere. (He begins to play and sing.) No, I spoil it. However, there's the music; you can learn it for yourself. (He retires, humming.)

Svava.—He is delightful! There is really something so artless about him.—Did you notice him yesterday? He was quite brilliant!

Mrs. Ries.—I wish you could have seen yourself!

Svava.—Yes. I was happy! Why should I deny it? Every one was so kind, yes, everybody! (She embraces her mother.)

Mrs. Ries.—Now I must look after the housekeeping a little.

Svava.—Shall I help you?

Mrs. Ries.—No; stop where you are!

Svava.—Well, I'll play over papa's tune once or twice—it is really pretty—and very soon Alf will be here! (Exit Mrs. Ries. Svava seats herself at the piano and plays.)

SCENE III.

Svava. Alf enters; comes up softly and leans over her.

Alf.—Thank you for yesterday!

Svava.—Alf! I didn't hear you ring.

Alf.—Your father met me at the door. What a pretty tune that is!

Svava.—Yes. And thank you, thank you so much for yesterday.

Alf.—You can't imagine what a success you were.

Svava.—Perhaps I can—just a wee bit.

Alf.—Every one is delighted at home.

Svava.—So they are here.

Alf.—If even "the Dragon" thought you "splendid," you can judge what an impression you made!

Svava.—Really? I fancied I had offended her.

Alf.—Oh, dear, no! But I saw you left her rather abruptly.

Svava.—Oh, that was nothing! What have you in your hand? A letter?

Alf.—Yes. Your maid gave it me. Some sharp fellow has found out that I should come here in the course of the morning.

Svava.—You think that was not hard to guess?

Alf.—Not very. I must go over to see Edward Hansen.

Svava.—You can take a short cut through the park.

Alf.—I know. And as he writes "urgent," and underlines the word—

Svava.—You can have my key. Here!

Alf.—Thanks! many thanks!

Svava.—Oh, it's purely selfish! I shall have you back again the sooner.

Alf.—I can stop here till noon—

Svava.—Oh, longer, much longer—can't you? We have such a lot to say to each other about yesterday.

Alf.—And about to-morrow, too. Do you know, I hadn't seen your father's floating ball-room?

Svava.—No? Did you ever hear of such an idea? I shall enjoy myself to-morrow!

Alf.—I shan't enjoy myself in the least.

Svava.—Is it possible? Why, everybody will.

Alf.—Except me; and that is why I do want a talk with you. Couldn't we meet somewhere to-morrow before the party? Alone?

Svava.—Will you come over here, then?

Alf.—Yes, but wouldn't it be better if we went out for a row?

Svava.—Just as you like.

Alf.—Ah! thanks. Quite early, mind. I can't spare you a moment; and the party only keeps you away from me. Why didn't we find each other sooner?

Svava.—Because we hadn't reached the right stage.

Alf.—How can you tell? I believe we were meant for one another.

Svava.—We suit each other very well—don't you think so?

Alf.—Uncommonly well! But we can't be sure that that isn't partly the result of what we were before.

Svava.—There! that's what I said!

Alf.—Now I must be off: the letter says "in haste."

Svava.—One minute can make no difference! Do you know when I saw you yesterday among the others I didn't recognize you? You were quite changed. You had become some one else.

Alf.—Ah! that's always the way, darling! there are some things one never sees except in connection with others. Now I realize for the first time how tall you are, and how, when you bow, you bend—the least little bit—to one side. Now I know exactly the color of your complexion, your hair, your neck . . .

Svava.—Excuse me, it's my turn to speak!

Alf.—Well, then?

Svava.—When you looked at me and leaned on me just now, I had such a strange sensation; I felt that I was blushing to the roots of my hair.

Alf.—Really? That isn't how I felt. Whenever any one danced with you I felt mad with jealousy. Yes, you may look at me! I begrudged you to him—yes, I begrudged you to every one! My God! I can't bear any one to touch you! But I've not yet told you what I like best of all.

Svava.—And that is?

Alf.—This.—If I saw you far off, among the others, it might be only a flying gleam of your arm, I loved to think: This arm has clung to my shoulder, to my neck, and to no other in the whole world! It is mine—it belongs to me, and to no one, no one, no one else! Why, how's this? Are we

back again already? This is sorcery! Well, I must go now. Good-bye! Why was not this happiness mine years ago? Good-bye!

Svava.—I think I'll come with you.

Alf.—Yes, do!

Svava.—No: I had better practice this tune until papa comes back. I shall have no time later on. Good-bye, then.

Alf.—Here comes some one! Send him off soon, whoever he is. We want to be alone.

SCENE IV.

Svava. Marie. Later, Hoff.

Marie.—A man is here who——

Svava.—Do you know him?

Marie.—No.

Svava.—What sort of man?

Marie.—Well, he is rather . . . rather . . .

Svava.—Suspicious-looking?

Marie.—Oh dear no! Quite a respectable man.

Svava.—Tell him papa is not at home.

Marie.—I have told him so; but he wishes to speak to you, Miss.

Svava.—Oh! ask mother to come. But no, why should she? Show him in.

Hoff.—Have I the honor to address Miss Ries? Yes, I see you are she. My name is Hoff—Karl Hoff, commercial traveller. In iron, Miss, in iron——

Svava.—Yes; but what have I——?

Hoff.—Well, you see, if I'd been an ordinary stay-at-home householder, like other people, a good many things would never have happened!

Svava.—What would never have happened?

Hoff.—Will you be so kind—so kind as to read this? Or perhaps you would rather not?

Svara.—Well, how can I tell?

Hoff.—No, of course: you must first . . . if you please——

Svara.—“This evening between ten and eleven—that is, if —‘the Noodle’ doesn’t come home—I love you with all my soul—Put a light in the passage window.”

Hoff.—I am “the Noodle.”

Svara.—But I don’t understand——

Hoff.—Here is another!

Svara.—“I am conscience-stricken. Your cough frightens me, and just now, when you are expecting . . .” But what in the world has all this to do with me?

Hoff.—Well, what do you think of it?

Svara.—Is it some one I ought to help?

Hoff.—No, she needs no help now, poor creature! She is dead.

Svara.—Dead? Was it your wife?

Hoff.—Yes, it was my wife. I found these and one more . . . in a little case. At the bottom lay the letters—these are not the only ones—and just above them was a little wadding in which was a pair of earrings, together with a few trinkets . . . —presents from her mother. And then I found these bracelets—look! they are decidedly too expensive for her mother to have given her!

Svara.—She died suddenly, then, before——

Hoff.—Well, I can’t say. Consumptive people never think they are going to die, else, no doubt, she would have hidden all this away. Ah! she was so gentle, so delicate! May I take a seat?

Svara.—Pray do! Are there any children?

Hoff.—I believe not.

Svara.—You believe not? I asked, because I thought you had come about our Orphanage. I need not say this is most painful for me!

Hoff.—Yes; so I thought, so I thought! I’m not at all sure whether I . . . but there! you don’t understand!

Svara.—No, indeed I can’t.

Hoff.—No, no, of course not! I've heard so much good of you for many years; and my wife used to praise you, too.

Svava.—Did she know me?

Hoff.—She was Maren Tang—she was a companion to——

Svava.—To Mrs. Christensen, my future mother-in-law? So it was she? Why, she was an educated, quiet, lady-like girl. Surely you have made some mistake? A few notes without a signature, without even a date?

Hoff.—Didn't you know the writing?

Svava.—I? No. It's disguised, isn't it?

Hoff.—Yes, but not very much, I think.

Svava.—Had you not a special object in coming to me?

Hoff.—I had; but I think I will let it alone. I see well enough you don't understand such things. Perhaps you think my mind is slightly affected. Well, it wouldn't be surprising.

Svava.—Still, you must have had an object?

Hoff.—So I had! You see, this Orphanage——

Svava.—Oh! it is about that, then!

Hoff.—No, not exactly. But it's owing to the Orphanage that I have thought so highly of you for a long time past—and a good many others have done the same. If I may take the liberty of saying so, I never saw any fashionable young lady before occupy herself with something useful. Never before. I am only a poor, broken-down merchant. I have to travel for other firms now, and I've met with many misfortunes. Perhaps I was to blame for most of them. But you see, I was anxious that you should be spared! I thought to myself, it's incumbent on me . . . my positive duty! . . . But now, when I sit face to face with you . . . I only feel that I'm very miserable. No, I want nothing from you, nothing at all.

Svava.—I don't understand you.

Hoff.—You mustn't bother any more about me. I beg your pardon a thousand times, a thousand times! No, please don't trouble your head about me in the least! Forget me altogether! I have not been here. That's all!

SCENE V.

Svava. Alf. Last of all, Ries.

(Svava, who has remarked the agitation of both men, utters a muffled shriek. She hastens toward Alf, but, as soon as she has looked him in the face, staggers back in sudden horror. Alf tries to support her.)

Svava.—Don't touch me.

ACT II.

The same room. The afternoon.

SCENE I.

Mrs. Ries. Marie.

Marie.—The gardener is here. He wishes to know how soon we are to bring in the flowers and decorate the music-room.

Mrs. Ries.—At once! . . . Or rather . . . I'm not quite sure, Marie.

Marie.—Well, we can't put it off any longer, ma'am, if we're to have any decorations at all.

Mrs. Ries.—Oh! we have plenty of time by to-morrow afternoon!

Marie.—Yes; but to-morrow there will be so many other things to do. Oh dear, Mrs. Ries, what is the matter? I saw Miss Svava go out just now looking so unhappy.

Mrs. Ries.—Well, she must tell you herself, Marie!

Marie.—Perhaps that is she. No; it is the ladies' trio. Must we have them now?

Mrs. Ries.—Oh dear! They want to practise, I suppose. The trio is to be sung to-morrow at the party—if there is to be one.

Marie.—What do you say?

Mrs. Ries.—Svava must tell you herself! We had better sit up late and do the work, Marie. I can't undertake anything now.

Marie.—Shall I tell the gardener he had better bring the flowers to-night?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, do, Marie.

SCENE II.

Mrs. Ries. The Ladies' Trio.

Six girls enter, each with a bouquet in her hand, led by Peter, tripping in waltz measure. Peter hastens at once to the piano and begins the accompaniment. The girls advance to Mrs. Ries, and move about her in waltz-time, while one couple dances round and round her. When they come to the words, "Hand in hand now turning, turning," they form a close circle round her. The dance is repeated.

Waltz.

Dawn, brightly breaking,
Blissful awaking,
When Love is born, like a flower set free,
When, in high splendor,
Magical, tender,
Venus soars up from the heart of the sea.
Rich to completeness,
Spring scatters sweetness;
Airs with glad greeting teem,
Beckon with scent and gleam,
Harmonies falling,
Beauties enthralling,
Blend, reeling forth in a riotous stream.

Hand in hand now turning, turning,
Steals through every maid a yearning;
Captive we by dreams enclosen,

Each is dreaming of her chosen,
 Dreams of wedding and of wooing,
 Love's obtaining, Love's undoing.

Fetterless forces
 Lie at Life's sources,
 Fires, that must mingle in madness of strife,
 Till, by their roaring
 Currents' outpouring
 Mightily moulded, at last blossoms life.
 Twine the wreath busily,
 Speed the dance dizzily,
 Swiftly desire to fulfilment is winging.
 Lovers! Love guide you,
 Dream-like, beside you,
 On—ever on—to the sound of our singing!

All.—Good-morning, auntie! How are you, auntie! How jolly it was yesterday!

Hanna.—Just fancy, auntie, we kept it up until five this morning!

Kamma and Frederike.—We went into the woods and sang.

Hanna.—We haven't been to bed at all.

The Others.—No: not one of us!

Several.—We have been together all this morning!

Frederike.—Yes, and we saw the pleasure-boats, too!

Hanna and Kamma.—We went on board——

All.—And danced!

Hanna.—Oh, it was splendid!

Frederike.—Ah! how jolly it will be to-morrow!

All.—O auntie!

Kamma.—And now we'll practise the trio for to-morrow. Isn't the new waltz charming?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, indeed.

Peter.—We shall have a pretty practice to-day!

Kamma.—Peter is as cross as a bear to-day.

Hanna.—Yes, odious!

All the Others.—Simply odious, auntie!

Kamma.—You know in the waltz it says: "Blissful awaking, when Love is born, like a flower set free?" Well, every time he roars out "Painful awaking!"

All.—Ha, ha, ha!

Hanna.—He's as dull as ditch water!

Frederike.—He's only tired, poor fellow! He's so blasé! It was a shame to keep him up all night.

All.—Poor thing!

Peter.—Thank you! I appreciate your sympathy, if I am blasé.

Hanna.—Where is Svava, auntie?

Mrs. Ries.—She has gone out.

Kamma.—With her fiancé?

Mrs. Ries.—No, alone.

Several.—Alone?

Peter.—Ha, ha, ha!

Frederike and Kamma.—Be quiet!

Hanna.—I can guess where she is!

Another.—So can I!

Hanna.—She is at Helga Holm's, auntie!

Frederike.—Isn't it shocking about Helga?

Mrs. Ries.—Indeed it is, child.

Hanna.—To be so deceived in her husband!

All.—Shocking!

Mrs. Ries.—Still, I wasn't altogether surprised.

Frederike.—Why? Was he always like that?

Kamma.—Before he was married?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes. And, as the French say, "Qu'il boit, boira."

All.—There, you hear that, Peter? You hear that?

Peter.—It may be true of Holm, but not of everybody. I think you are all crazy!

Mrs. Ries.—No, of course it is not true of everybody. There are exceptions.

Peter.—There, you hear that? You hear that?

Some.—We didn't say "everybody!"

Peter.—Yes, you did, you little geese!

All.—"Little geese," auntie!

Mrs. Ries.—There are exceptions. But, as a rule, I find that either a man is faithful to one woman on principle, or else, his principles allow him to be unfaithful. At any rate, that's my opinion.

Several.—Peter, Peter, you hear that?

Hanna.—You must always be faithful, do you understand?

Peter.—Fiddle-de-dee! To whom, if I'm not married?

Hanna.—To yourself, stupid!

Peter.—Ah! Rubbish!

All.—Did you hear, auntie? Peter says "Rubbish!"

SCENE III.

As before. Svava enters hastily from the Park; on seeing the others wishes to turn back.

Peter.—Here's Svava!

All.—Here's Svava. Here's a bouquet for you! How charming you were yesterday! We have not been to bed all night! We have been singing in the wood. We have been about together all day. Now we are going to practise the trio.

Hanna.—Why, Svava, what is the matter with you?

Kamma.—Is there anything wrong?

Mrs. Ries.—Don't you see, she has just come from Helga Holm?

All.—Of course she has!

Mrs. Ries.—Helga is her bosom friend, you know.

Several.—So she is.

Svava.—How lovely the flowers are! Thank you, thank you very much! Shall we put them in water at once, mother?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, I will see to it. (She touches a bell, and a maid appears, who brings a basin, in which Mrs. Ries arranges the flowers.)

Svava.—How fresh and sweet they are! We must take great care of them, else they'll die, too, very soon! Yes, you're quite right; I have been with Helga Holm. Where else should I have been?

Kamma.—Isn't it shocking? The whole town is talking about it.

Svava.—Really?

Several.—The whole town!

Svava.—Well, there'll be still more to talk about.

Hanna.—Will there?

Several.—Will there?

Svava.—Yes. But that's splendid, that the whole town should be talking about it! That is as it should be! Every one should talk about it! . . . Oh, I think I must go out into the air again!

Mrs. Ries.—Take off your hat, darling!

Svava.—Ah! yes; I didn't think of that.

Hanna.—You look so strange, Svava!

All.—Yes, she does.

Svava.—Do I? Well, I must have been out more than two hours, and all that time I have heard nothing but "Tell me, tell me, tell me!" I couldn't bear it any longer!

Mrs. Ries.—Come with me, come to your room, dear! You want rest.

Svava.—Rest? Now? If only I could scream or cry! When you have been deceived——

Mrs. Ries.—Like Helga Holm?

Svava.—Like Helga Holm? Yes, Helga Holm! Ah! no: I must speak out. All this time I have scarcely said a dozen words. My God!

Mrs. Ries.—Hush! Come with me, then, come and tell me!

Svava.—No, you don't understand. I didn't mean that. What I have heard shall never pass my lips. No! I must

say something to warn these girls. There is one thing we women never learn——

Hanna.—What is that?

Svava.—How easily and how often we deceive ourselves! The greatest precaution is no use. We are mistaken, again and again! A man folds his arms round you and says: "I can't bear any one else to touch you!" Gazing into your eyes, as he walks beside you, he says: "When I see in the ball-room only a flying gleam of your arm, I think, This arm has clung to my neck, and to no other—no other in the whole world!" Can she believe, then, that his arm has embraced . . . that he . . . (She bursts into tears.)

Mrs. Ries.—Listen to me, Svava!

Svava.—Don't believe him! He'll only make a fool of you, too! (She draws back.)

Mrs. Ries.—You have had a dreadful shock, darling. Don't speak of it again.

Peter.—There'll be no party here to-morrow, you'll see!

Several.—Oh, hold your tongue!

Peter.—I can see it in her face. She is in no mood for giving a party.

Frederike.—But Svava——? (Svava has stepped aside.)

Hanna.—Auntie, is it true?

Kamma.—Won't there be a party?

All.—Oh yes! Oh yes!

Mrs. Ries.—I hope so.

All.—(Surrounding Svava.) What about the party?

Svava.—What do you say?

Peter.—You're not in the mood for giving a party here to-morrow, are you?

Svava.—Oh!—the party! (Goes to Mrs. Ries.) Must we give one to-morrow?

Peter.—There! you see!

Mrs. Ries.—Of course there will be a party. Of course!

Svava.—Yes, of course!

All.—There will be a party! there will be a party! Hurrah!

Peter.—Hurrah! So much for their sympathy with Helga Holm! Hurrah!

Frederike.—Take care, Peter; you shall pay for that!

All.—Come: let's throw him out? (They rush at Peter.)

Peter.—No, no: I've an idea.

Hanna.—What is it?

Peter.—Let's sing the waltz to Svava. It will put her in good spirits.

All.—Yes!

Mrs. Ries.—Oh no, children! don't! Why not take a boat instead, and sing it out there on the water?

All the Girls and Peter.—Oh yes! yes!

Peter.—But we'll sing it here, too, that Svava may hear how well it goes already! (He goes to the piano, and the music is distributed.)

Svava.—Send them away, do send them away!

Mrs. Ries.—Very well!

Svava.—There can be no party here to-morrow!

Mrs. Ries.—Just wait a little! (All the girls march out in pairs, singing as Peter leads them away.)

Svava.—Oh, my head, my head! I feel as if it were splitting! And yet I've scarcely said a word until just now.

Mrs. Ries.—You are too excited. You must control yourself, my child! You can't stand this!

Svava.—I shall never have peace again!

Mrs. Ries.—Where have you been?

Svava.—Oh, didn't you guess? And you talk of a party! You looked so shocked, that you made me say "yes," too! There can be no question of a party here. Besides, why should we give one now?

Mrs. Ries.—You surely wouldn't have sent all those children away with such a rebuff? I was on thorns.

Svava.—Well, it makes no difference to me! Nothing can make any difference now!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes; but we can't put off the party. We owe it to ourselves as much as to the Christensens! Here comes papa!

Svava.—Papa too! Well, let him come! . . . though I feel so weak, so dizzy! I can't begin a fight now; but I know well enough what he wants.

SCENE IV.

As before. Ries enters from the back.

Ries.—Oh! are you there? Why, Svava, what are you thinking of? Now listen, my dear girl! Let me tell you, that Mr. Christensen has just telephoned to my office, asking if I am at home. In a minute he will be here.

Svava.—I won't speak to him!

Ries.—Very well! But you must stop here and speak to me! Wait a moment! I'm only going into my room to put away my new hat. I'm rather dusty, too.

Mrs. Ries.—Of course Mr. Christensen will come! I quite expected him. If you break off your engagement with Alf, and for no other reason than this, you will involve the Christensens in a very great scandal. Haven't you realized that?

Svava.—So it is I who will cause the scandal? That's very fine! It's all my fault!

Mrs. Ries.—The scandal doesn't consist in the thing itself, but in its exposure.

Svava.—Exactly! exactly!

Mrs. Ries.—Don't think that so unimportant! One day you will know what it means. It is not so easy to reform the world.

Svava.—I have no wish to reform it. I only wish to protect myself—that is all!

Ries.—Of course, the moment I get home I come in for a bother of this kind. Well, I suppose it couldn't be helped. Indeed, that's your only excuse. Oh! by the way, I just met a man in the street who was at the party last night. He was talking about it. The chief clerk at . . . what's his name? You know him. He owns that charming little place along the fiord—the place you liked so much? With the Moorish dovecot . . .?

Mrs. Ries.—Klinger?

Ries.—Ah! Klinger, Klinger. It seems he is anxious to sell it. Oh! and he said: "You may well feel flattered at your daughter's reception last night; it was a perfect triumph. I pictured her on a high throne, with the whole Christensen family—including 'the Dragon'—drawing her chariot." I assure you, those were his very words. Think of the honor you reflect on us, child! And what a splendid position you will have! . . . And so you want to jump down from your pedestal? Well, you won't get much by that. You will simply fall—smash! before you know where you are. Do you imagine that any well-to-do family anywhere would submit to such an insult, such a slur upon their favorite child? Eh? If you hadn't been suffering from intense excitement, I should have thought you out of your wits to say what you did. And if you take no thought for your own welfare, at least consider ours! On my word, I might just as well have taken a passage to America! I did think of it when I passed the quay and saw the Angelo lying ready to sail!

Svava.—We had better go to America!

Ries.—Better go to America? go to America? A grand idea, isn't it? Such ridiculous nonsense! You seem to think it's as easy to cross the Atlantic as to cross the street. Whatever folly Alf Christensen may have committed—I know nothing about it—it can't have been so very bad. Come, for God's sake, Svava!

Svava.—Pray, don't drag God's name into it!

Ries.—Why not? I should have thought the matter quite serious enough. Doesn't the commandment run: "Little children, forgive one another"—or something like it? I am not sure of the exact words. We ought to forgive one another; we ought to help one who has gone astray. It's our duty. Help him to become better . . . by degrees!

Mrs. Ries.—Ahem!

Ries.—Well, it's not my business to preach morality; it sits badly on me, I know. It's very seldom I do. But, all the same, you can't do away with one eternal truth: the woman's duty is to be forbearing to the man, to win him by gentleness and love,—in short, by forbearance. And I don't know any

one so admirably adapted for such a work as yourself, Svava. You seem especially gifted. Then again, you have had so much experience—I mean with children. For it's the same sort of thing. In fact, I consider it woman's noblest vocation!

Svava.—What?

Ries.—What . . . ? Haven't you been paying attention? Why to . . . to . . . to . . . —you surely don't need to ask? —to exert an ennobling influence through marriage, to make her husband's life spotless, like . . .

Svava.—Like soap?

Ries.—Soap? Who the devil is talking about soap?

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—Oh, you find that witty?

Svava.—It comes to this, then. Marriage is a huge laundry for men, where we girls are to stand ready,—each, I suppose, at her wash-tub, and each with her piece of soap. Is that what you mean?

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—I don't think it's a subject for laughter.

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—Really, I think these violent attacks on marriage should be left to the more licentious sections of society.

Svava.—To the men, do you mean?

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—Men more licentious than women? Take the women you see at a ball, for instance! With their shoulders bared to the public gaze! And who is the most successful with them? Why, your Don Juans unquestionably! They find such men "so delightful!" so "piquant!" Of course! Don't confine your censures to men! You are so taken up with this modern Lamentation over Men, that you forget what the world is like. You forget your own natures. I assure you, you do. (To Mrs. Ries.) This is all your fault.

Mrs. Ries.—Mine?

Svava.—Mother's fault?

Ries.—It is the same nonsense your mother always talked. Just the same! And now you have put it into Svava's head! This babble about a "beast of prey" and about a man's "freedom to prey on woman" hindering all other freedom! Is that never going to die out?

Mrs. Ries.—I could answer you if I chose. You count on my silence.

Ries.—Well, help me, then, confound it! It's a matter of life and death for us. We shall all be turned into the streets if she doesn't mind.

Mrs. Ries.—It's not quite so bad as that; although it is serious, as I told Svava.

Ries.—Oh, I'm glad of that. And, pray, how am I to answer Christensen? That's what worries me. For, with all his elegance and polish, there's not a more revengeful tiger in the whole town. His bite is even worse than "the Dragon's." They are not related for nothing. Am I to say: "Pardon me, my dear Mr. Christensen, but my daughter is very sensitive on this point; she cannot reconcile herself to the idea that your son actually ventured to love some one else before he knew her." Is that what I'm to say? God knows how I came to be the father of such a paragon of virtue!

Svava.—Bravo! I only beg leave to correct one word.

Ries.—Well?

Svava.—I think you said "love."

Ries.—Well?

Svava.—I never reproached Alf with loving another woman.

Ries.—No?

Svava.—No, certainly not!

Ries.—Oh—ah! I understand! He was—associated—with another woman. Unhappy man! He was associated with another woman before he had the honor and good fortune to know of your existence!

Svava.—With one other?

Ries.—Well, say with two!

Svava.—With two?

Ries.—Deuce take it! with several, then! How everything is buzzed round in this accursed town!

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—Yes: laugh away! But I ask you in all seriousness—for my part, I find this matter very serious—would any one but you be so absurdly unreasonable? A young man is not to be allowed to take a fancy to any one until you appear on the scene in all your majestic virtue? I never met with such arrogance in my life! Never!

Svava.—Arrogance? To claim from another what is expected of yourself?

Mrs. Ries.—Ah! that's the point!

Ries.—Yes: that is the point! Precisely! You claim the same from man and woman! Woman, who for centuries has been treated as a man's private property. Of course with men it has been very different! No: I can't imagine more consummate arrogance! What the Germans call *hochmuth*, the French *hauteur*, the English—

Mrs. Ries.—My dear Ries, what is "marriage" in Turkish?

Ries.—"Marriage" in Turkish? Oh, I see! Now I ask you: Is this helping me? Well, I make you responsible—solely responsible!

Mrs. Ries.—For ruining her life?

Ries.—Whose? Svava's?

Svava.—Do you really wish me to make my home with a man like that?

Ries.—What in the world do you mean?

Svava.—Do you suppose I don't know what it is? Mothers often come to our Orphanage, who need help more than the children. And the tales they tell! To hear them is like gazing down into a black, bottomless hell. Think of what it means, to admit such a pest into a home!

Ries.—What are you dreaming of, Svava? Can't you believe that all that sort of thing ceases at marriage? Can't you believe a man's word of honor?

Mrs. Ries.—Ha, ha, ha!

Ries.—Well, well—and if a little slip does occur—so long as they love each other, . . . and you do love him, don't you,

Svava? You can't deny it. Well, then, simply trust your parents! (Svava breaks away. The door-bell rings.)

Mrs. Ries.—That's Christensen! I'm going!

Ries.—No: you are not going! You mustn't go! Not both of you! All right! Then I shall go too!

Mrs. Ries.—I have nothing to say to Christensen!

Ries.—And have I? Have I any part in all this virtue?

Mrs. Ries.—Oh! as to virtue—Christensen and you—you and Christensen—are really *partie égale*! (Exit.)

Ries.—De la haute morale! Yes; a pretty moral, to leave me alone to eat up what they've cooked. It's not my fault. I'll be obtuse—I'll know nothing about it. Yes; that's what I'll do! If he shows his teeth, I'll show mine! I shall say straight out: "I know nothing at all—haven't heard a word about it!" I'll say: "The thing can't possibly go any further—if no one has mentioned it even to me." Yes; I'll say that; that's what I'll do! (The door-bell rings again.) Hullo! He's still outside! Ho, ho! I shan't open the door to you, my dear friend! Stop! I'll say: "Let the young folk make it up! We needn't mind what a woman says when she has lost her temper. Let them make it up themselves!" Yes; that's the way to look at it! That's the best thing. I'm quite a diplomatist! (He goes to the piano and plays.)

SCENE V.

Ries. Christensen.

Christensen.—(Enters slowly, and stands still a moment.) Bravo! bravo!

Ries.—Ah! pardon me! I didn't see you, never heard you come in!

Chris.—Pray, don't mention it! Your playing is delightful. There's nothing wrong, then?

Ries.—Eh? What do you mean? What should be wrong? Oh! you mean that affair of this morning? That unfortunate business with that clumsy Hoff? Bah! mere woman's chatter! What a woman says or writes on the impulse of the

moment needn't be taken au pied de lettre—eh? We know, that's soon over. Won't you take a seat?

Chris.—Thanks. To-day I've just a twinge in my foot again . . . nothing serious . . . merely a touch . . .

Ries.—Gout?

Chris.—Confound you! don't call it! It will come at once. There's no danger, then?

Ries.—Not so far as I know! Let the young folk make it up themselves. Don't you think so?

Chris.—Where are the ladies?

Ries.—I don't know.

Chris.—In-deed? I suppose they knew that I was coming?

Ries.—No—or—rather, yes! I expect I told them. Aren't you thirsty after your walk?

Chris.—No, thank you, Ahem! ahem! Can it have passed over so quickly?

Ries.—Passed over? What? Oh! you mean that affair of this morning? Well, really, I know nothing about it.

Chris.—I thought we should have an open rupture, a scandal, and all that!

Ries.—Ah! Ha, ha, ha!

Chris.—Well, I'm very glad. You are so confident, Mr. Ries. I can't share your feeling at all. These things are dangerous—especially the first time, you know.

Ries.—Yes, between married people.

Chris.—Oh! between engaged people they're even more dangerous. Once you're married—well, of course, you are married. But in this case—don't you see? And if there's danger for Alf, well—then—there may be danger for others as well!

Ries.—For others?

Chris.—Yes . . . If such a very strong light is thrown on my son's window, no doubt some of the rays will fall on mine too. That light—what do painters call it?

Ries.—Reflected light?

Chris.—Reflected light! Exactly!

Ries.—Ho, ho!

Chris.—Yes, laugh away! You must have your joke. But, between you and me, what are these ideas that your daughter has?

Ries.—Shall I tell you exactly?

Chris.—By all means.

Ries.—She thinks that a man . . . a man should live the same life . . .

Chris.—Well! well!

Ries.—As a girl!—a young girl!

Chris.—A man live as strict a life as a young girl? A man?

Ries.—Just so!

Chris.—Is she as silly as that?

Ries.—Indeed, she is.

Chris.—Ha, ha!

Ries.—Ho, ho!

Chris.—You must have your joke! You're making fun of me!

Ries.—Not at all!

Chris.—But the girls of the present day seem to wish just the opposite?

Ries.—I've no objection.

Chris.—Neither have I. Not that I should care to marry one.

Ries.—Whew! No, thank you!

Chris.—But now with regard to your daughter, Mr. Ries. She has been confirmed, hasn't she? And, I suppose, she has been to school, too—what? They learn all sorts of things at school. Her parents' house, of course, has long been recognized as a pattern of good morals. But still, isn't she old enough to read French? Or, in any case, our own literature? These Scandinavian authors don't write for the nursery. And, then, there's this Orphanage, which your daughter founded—didn't she? She must hear all kinds of stories told there by the mothers? And travelled too, hasn't she?

Ries.—A good deal.

Chris.—Well, there you are! And not with her eyes shut. She had you with her. So she must know a little about life, anyhow!

Ries.—Yes: and what she didn't know before, she must have learned by now . . . since she became acquainted with your family.

Chris.—You mean, that she is in a position to compare . . .

Ries.—Theory with practice. She couldn't have had a better opportunity.

Chris.—Hadh't she that already? Well, I'm afraid her reforms will encounter obstacles. Why, you might as well forbid people to eat and drink—eh?

Ries.—Ha, ha!

Chris.—Ha, ha! Can you imagine, my dear Mr. Ries, the finest and most capable young men in the country (for they are most concerned in this matter) expelled in future from society, and branded as a separate class! All, who—well, who don't endorse your daughter's theory? People demand so much nowadays in the name of morality, that in the end what they demand becomes itself immoral!

Ries.—I quite agree with you!

Chris.—I knew you would. If people were to take things too seriously—marriage, for example—well, to take only one instance, all the great cities would be ruined. They would collapse, for want of air, like a squeezed india-rubber ball! No, let us make no mistake, my dear Mr. Ries, if your daughter behaves like this, and causes unpleasantness—then—well, then——

Ries.—What then?

Chris.—Then it will be my turn. I shall begin.

Ries.—You? What do you mean?

Chris.—She shall have tit for tat.

Ries.—You'll tell her your ideas? I don't understand.

Chris.—Not only my ideas. I'll take care it isn't only on my windows that the—what's the painter's name for it?

Ries.—The reflected light.

Chris.—Yes; I'll take care the reflected light doesn't only fall on my windows!

Ries.—On whose, then?

Chris.—I won't say.

Ries.—You're as fond of a joke as ever.

Chris.—We both are. However, if you wish to treat it as a joke, you can!

Ries.—At whose expense?

Chris.—I won't say.

Ries.—Well, I can't help what your son did. If you ask me, I think he had better have left it alone, and so had my daughter, instead of making such a stir. For my part, I shall be best pleased if all ends quietly. And that is most likely to happen, in my opinion, if we parents take no more trouble about it.

Chris.—You really think so?

Ries.—I do.

Chris.—Can you guarantee that?

Ries.—Guarantee it? How can I?

Chris.—Well, that's your affair. I must have some security, and, for various reasons, I choose you.

Ries.—Me?

Chris.—There's no peace for the wicked. After the banquet, the bill. Don't you see?

Ries.—No, I don't! Such wit is beyond me. And the moral?

Chris.—Why, in this bad world innocent people often have to suffer, you know. That is the moral. Do you happen to know Mrs. North?

Ries.—Mrs. . . . Mrs. . . . s . . s . . s . . ? No!

Chris.—Ah! think again! The pretty young widow—the Englishwoman with the pale mother. What? You really can't remember her? And yet I used to see you play duets with her!

Ries.—Oh! that woman! of course I know her. I couldn't remember the name, and couldn't quite understand how you came to speak of her just now. Why did you?

Chris.—A little while ago she fell into some money difficulties—such as may happen to the best of us. She is rather gay, you know—lives in great style—and at that time she did me the honor to pay me a visit. You were not at home just then.

Ries.—I? I never had anything to do with Mrs. North's money matters.

Chris.—I only wished to pay you a compliment. Your gallantry to ladies is so widely recognized, you know, that, had you been in the town, of course she would have come to you—with whom she used to play duets—not to me. That was all I meant. What did you think I meant?

Ries.—Mean what you like! What have Mrs. North's money matters to do with me?

Chris.—She is going abroad!

Ries.—Indeed!

Chris.—She's coming here to say good-bye.

Ries.—Coming here?

Chris.—Yes. She used to come here often enough . . . at one time. When you used to play duets together.

Ries.—Not latterly.

Chris.—I wasn't aware of that. She said nothing to me about it. We made an appointment to meet—she and I—here.

Ries.—You and Mrs. North? To meet here? Now?

Chris.—She is going on board to-night. The *Angelo* is lying ready to sail.

Ries.—Of course I shall be pleased to see Mrs. North. It can't matter to me. I have nothing against her. But I don't see why my wife should meet her here, if she doesn't wish it. And she certainly doesn't. Therefore Mrs. North can't come. It is impossible.

Chris.—Well, but your wife isn't at home? Surely you can receive her?

Ries.—Impossible! Suppose my wife came in? They mustn't meet on any account.

Chris.—Well, shall I . . . ?

Ries.—Oh dear no! But, of course, if Mrs North does come, you won't mind my going out to induce her to go away?

Chris.—Of course not. So you, too, are afraid of the reflected light?

Ries.—Not in the least. I am simply considering my wife.

Chris.—That's really very nice of you. It isn't every one who does that. There she is—I believe—already.

Ries.—Mrs. North? Impossible!

Chris.—I've often noticed how punctual she is. English, you know!

Ries.—Yes, by Jove! there she is!

Chris.—Of course you will let her in at once.

Ries.—Excuse me! On no account. I must prevent it.

Chris.—Hallo! why, your wife is at home.

Ries.—My wife? Where is she

Chris.—Down there! She is just meeting Mrs. North.

Ries.—My wife? Mrs. . . . ?

Chris.—Yes! there she goes, full sail!

Ries.—Really! really! Is she at home, after all? Dear me! What will happen next? An earthquake?

Chris.—Why, your daughter is at home too!

Ries.—My daughter too . . . where?

Chris.—Down there as well. Your wife has stepped forward a little, your daughter is stopping still. Won't you convince yourself?

Ries.—Oh no! Thank you, thank you! No! Let's leave them alone! Let's leave them alone! I shall enter a monastery! A monastery's the place for me! No. I'll go to the piano instead! I'll plunge head over heels into a waltz!

SCENE VI.

As before. Mrs. Ries, white as a sheet and speechless, enters hastily from the back.

Chris.—We are having a little music, Mrs. Ries.

Mrs. Ries.—Mrs. North is here.

Ries.—Oh, is that you?

Chris.—Your husband has a fine touch. And a good voice, too!

Mrs. Ries.—Mrs. North is here!

Ries.—What? Who? Oh—ah! Mrs. North! In half a minute, I'll . . . My dear, what can she want here? Oh! my hat! I beg your pardon! Ah! the Trio! How lovely music sounds on the water! Now what can this woman want from me?

Chris.—How lucky that I was able to see you! Your husband had no idea you were at home!

Mrs. Ries.—This is your work!

Chris.—What do you mean?

Mrs. Ries.—Mrs. North's visit.

Chris.—To say good-bye?

Mrs. Ries.—You know the secret of this house. And you intend to use it against us.

Chris.—I and mine wish for nothing better than to live on good terms with you and yours. You know that quite well. But if your daughter persists in bringing disgrace, perhaps calamity, on all of us—for my son takes the matter greatly to heart—why, in that case, Mrs. Ries, in that case . . .

Mrs. Ries.—You are a wicked man!

Chris.—And a good man. Both together. I only wish to say this: If you expose my son, I'll expose your husband!

Mrs. Ries.—What barbarity! Svava!

Chris.—I didn't wish that! I didn't intend that. However, *enfin!*

SCENE VII.

Mrs. Ries. Svava enters slowly from the left.

Mrs. Ries.—Listen to me, before you judge, listen to me!

Svava.—This is too much in one day!

Mrs. Ries.—Let me explain to you. Let me tell you—

Svava.—Oh no! Let me be alone!

ACT III. SCENE I.

The same room on the next morning, decorated with flowers for the party. The table on the right is laid for breakfast for two persons.

Mrs. Ries and Mrs. Christensen enter from the back; the latter in a hat and with a shawl over her arm, which Mrs. Ries takes from her. Enter later, Marie.

Mrs. Christensen.—It was extremely kind of you to see me. I am sure you must be very busy.

Mrs. Ries.—And I am so grateful to you for coming. I wanted to have a talk with you.

Mrs. Chris.—Well, what do you say to our having the party here to-day—after all? Do you know, I'm sure it's the best thing to do? If the engagement is to be broken off, at any rate, it mustn't be in this way.

Mrs. Ries.—I thoroughly agree with you.

Mrs. Chris.—Think of the gossip it would cause! Two days after the engagement had been announced!

Mrs. Ries.—Still, it is very trying for Svava.

Mrs. Chris.—Of course. But she need only show herself and say she is unwell. By the way, your husband asked to be remembered to you.

Mrs. Ries.—Has he been round to see you already?

Mrs. Chris.—He came expressly to fetch Alf. What an amusing man your husband is!

Mrs. Ries.—And your son had no objection?

Mrs. Chris.—How can you ask? If we're to have the party, of course the young folk must have a talk together first!

Mrs. Ries.—So we thought!

Mrs. Chris.—Of course! She takes it more sensibly, I hear, to-day.

Mrs. Ries.—As regards the party, yes. Won't you sit down?

Mrs. Chris.—Thank you. What does she say, Mrs. Ries?

Mrs. Ries.—I've scarcely spoken to her myself. I've not had a chance yet; I've so much depending on me to-day. What a blessing it is that we still have old Marie with us!

Enter Marie, with the chocolate.

Mrs. Chris.—Good-morning, Marie!

Marie.—Good-morning, Mrs. Christensen!

Mrs. Chris.—How is Miss Ries?

Marie.—Thank you, she was not at all well yesterday—after Mr. Christensen called.

Mrs. Chris.—Christensen? Did he call yesterday?

Marie.—Yesterday evening.

Mrs. Chris.—Yesterday evening? My husband?

Mrs. Ries.—He just dropped in to see Ries.

Mrs. Chris.—Indeed? He said nothing about it.

Marie.—I think she takes it more sensibly to-day. She cries a good deal still; but she went for her bath, and ate a little breakfast. Now she's out for a walk.

Mrs. Ries.—Pray help yourself!

Mrs. Chris.—Thanks! What does she say, Marie?

Marie.—She doesn't say much. But she's more resigned to the idea of the party.

Mrs. Chris.—Is she?

Marie.—She thinks the party cannot be put off.

Mrs. Chris.—Of course not!

Marie.—She quite sees that. I told her so myself.

Mrs. Ries.—Won't you try this cake? It's a specialty.

Mrs. Chris.—Thanks very much! What does she say about Alf?

Marie.—She said to-day: "Perhaps I've been unjust to him."

Mrs. Chris.—Ah, indeed she has, Marie. So she sees that now?

Marie.—And then she began to cry. I didn't like to bother her any more.

Mrs. Chris.—Thank you, Marie, thank you! (Marie goes out.) Aren't you pleased? You hear what Marie says?

Marie.—(Turns round.) What?

Mrs. Chris.—I didn't call you: I only mentioned your name.

Marie.—Oh, I see!

(She goes out.)

Mrs. Chris.—You are upset, Mrs. Ries. I should so like to have a little talk with you. We mothers understand these things so much better than men.

Mrs. Ries.—I thought that, too.

Mrs. Chris.—May I?

Mrs. Ries.—(Helping her.) I beg your pardon? I'm forgetting everything!

Mrs. Chris.—Your cake is delicious. As to what happened yesterday, of course it was awfully unpleasant—that affair with Hoff. To think that he should have the impertinence! This is how it came about: Miss Tang—I think you knew Miss Tang?—used to live with us. But Christensen is so strict: he won't have anything of that sort in the house. So we had to send Alf away—and she got married. I assure you, Mrs. Ries, no one was any the wiser. Alf is so discreet in these matters—you wouldn't believe how discreet he is. If Hoff hadn't found those tiresome letters, he would never have known anything. And Christensen will soon put that to rights, you may be quite sure! No one knows a word about it; that's the great thing, Mrs. Ries. Men will be men, and we can't alter them.

Mrs. Ries.—Ah, if Mrs. Hoff's were the only case!

Mrs. Chris.—But surely there are no others?

Mrs. Ries.—Indeed there are. Yesterday afternoon Svava went straight off to Miss Honoria Christensen.

Mrs. Chris.—To "the Dragon?" My dear Mrs. Ries, what a thing to do!

Mrs. Ries.—And there she learned a great deal.

Mrs. Chris.—Oh! but you mustn't believe her, Mrs. Ries. Every one knows "the Dragon." Once she was taken in herself, and she has made a dead set at all engagements ever since; it's a well-known fact! She has made a good deal of mischief before now; she's a spiteful woman.

Mrs. Ries.—Spiteful she may be, but she's not a liar.

Mrs. Chris.—The Christensens are not in the habit of lying. But, Mrs. Ries, . . . she may be misinformed by others!

Mrs. Ries.—All this has shocked my daughter terribly.

Mrs. Chris.—Of course. Isn't "the Dragon" detestable? She almost hates Alf—and do you know why? Because he has such a good reputation.

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, he has.

Mrs. Chris.—Indeed he has!

Mrs. Ries.—Still, he has been rather wild, hasn't he, however discreet? . . . And if a man doesn't resist temptation early in life, but gives way time after time, you can't expect him to have much character, can you?

Mrs. Chris.—No: you're quite right! You must forgive me! I have had no breakfast yet. I have got into the bad habit of lying very late in the morning.

Mrs. Ries.—Please help yourself! I didn't say that because I expect any more from your son than from others.

Mrs. Chris.—No, most young men are alike. Just fancy, Mrs. Ries, I knew nothing about such things when I married.

Mrs. Ries.—We didn't know much in those days; or, if we did, we thought no more about it. However, many of us had all the more to learn afterward, Mrs. Christensen.

Mrs. Chris.—Don't speak of it!

Mrs. Ries.—I think we ought to speak of it more than ever, for it's just that which concerns us now.

Mrs. Chris.—Oh, I must tell you something! The other day I was looking through a history belonging to my daughter—she's a student, you know. I read there that the bridal costume—the white robe, the veil and all that—is nothing but the old sacrificial dress, handed down from the time when human beings were offered up to Moloch. The same is true of the wreath worn by the innocent victims. It made me cry, Mrs. Ries. (Marie comes in with a small bottle of champagne.) Oh, my dear Mrs. Ries—!

Mrs. Ries.—I am told that now and then at breakfast you—

Mrs. Chris.—True. But why should you take so much trouble? Still, you wouldn't believe what good champagne does, when you have had no sleep. And, I expect, neither you nor I slept particularly well last night.

Mrs. Ries.—(Offering a glass to Mrs. Christenson.) Allow me.

Mrs. Chris.—Let's drink this toast: That all may come right again!

Mrs. Ries.—Yes: I could wish for nothing better. If only——

Mrs. Chris.—Oh, you may be quite easy. Alf has such a refined nature.

Mrs. Ries.—Is he true?

Mrs. Chris.—True as steel! (They drink.) You must drink it all! Else it won't do you good.

Mrs. Ries.—Yes, I really think——

Mrs. Chris.—Of course, one mustn't be unjust, either—I mean, to men. For, after all, such men generally make the best husbands, Mrs. Ries. We can't deny that.

Mrs. Ries.—They make us comfortable, do you mean?

Mrs. Chris.—Yes, and treat their wives with respect. It is so, as a rule.

Mrs. Ries.—They are very obliging.

Mrs. Chris.—Most obliging, and much more attentive than other husbands. Let us give them their due.

Mrs. Ries.—Still, it is not right of wives to condone——

Mrs. Chris.—No, it's not right. But so it is, whether we like it or not. If I may, I'll take another piece of cake. It is really delicious.

Mrs. Ries.—Do! May I fill up your glass?

Mrs. Chris.—Thanks, only a little. We women have so much to put up with, so much that taxes our strength. (She drinks.) Still, on the other hand, we have many consolations, too. A man may have faults, and yet be a real treasure in other respects—don't you think?

Mrs. Ries.—Yes. Only my mother said once to . . . well, to a friend of mine—it's a long while ago now . . . —she said: "Let him be the ablest man in the whole town: you will be none the happier if he isn't faithful."

Mrs. Chris.—You are so upset to-day, Mrs. Ries. You have had no sleep. Come, drink a little more wine, to keep me com-

pany. It will do you good. May I? (She takes the bottle and pours the rest of the wine into Mrs. Ries' glass—and her own.) The chaplain very often calls about this time in the morning. And then we sit and chat together, just as you and I are doing now. (She takes her glass.) Well, may everything end happily, Mrs. Ries! (They drink.)

Mrs. Ries.—I can't finish it.

Mrs. Chris.—No? Then—if you'll excuse me—I will. One soon feels at home with you Mrs. Ries. You must come to see me oftener. About this time is the best. I suppose you go to hear the chaplain's sermons, don't you?

Mrs. Ries.—No; I haven't cared about going to church lately.

Mrs. Chris.—Oh! but you should. If we hadn't the consolation of religion, Mrs. Ries! I'm sure, very often, I don't know where . . .

SCENE II.

As before. *Ries.*

Ries.—Look here!

Mrs. Chris.—Back already?

Ries.—Yes, and I brought Alf: I only waited till he had finished dressing. I wished him to come before Svava returns. It is best they should meet out of doors. She can't help speaking to him then; she can't very well run away from him.

Mrs. Chris.—You are quite right. In fact, you generally are.

Ries.—Thank you; much obliged. (To his wife.) Do you hear that?

Mrs. Chris.—This meeting between our dear children is of great importance to us all.

Ries.—Of the greatest importance! But I'm disturbing you.

Mrs. Chris.—Not at all, not at all! I was only anxious that we mothers might have a little chat together. Of course we have had most experience.

Ries.—Naturally.

Mrs. Chris.—I tell your wife that marriage doesn't consist only of love, but of many other things as well. Am I right?

Ries.—I should think so! And a marriage with your son——

Mrs. Chris.—Oh, I never said that!

Ries.—Why shouldn't you? It is only word for word what I was saying yesterday. I can tell you that without flattering you or your son.

Mrs. Chris.—When you think it is a choice between making such a match—well, as your daughter can make—and becoming an embittered old maid like “the Dragon!”—Ugh!

Ries.—Ugh! Do you know a favorite saying of mine? If virtue is not to decay, it must be preserved by matrimony. Just as fruit——

Mrs. Chris.—Ha, ha, ha! I never thought we should laugh to-day. Let's take it for a good omen! May we often meet and laugh together in future! Good-bye! for I really must go now. The whole family is assembled in our house.

Ries.—So I hear.

Mrs. Chris.—We shall come in ever so many boats, with singing and playing, for we have a whole orchestra amongst us. Pray don't give yourselves the trouble! No, really, I can't allow it!
(*Ries and Mrs. Ries follow her out.*)

Ries.—(Coming back at once.) Truly, I'm as tired . . . of all this worry and suspense, as if I had spent the whole morning on the treadmill—and the whole night, too! I bought a large new flag to-day. And I carried it home myself. Here it is. (He fetches it. After a pause.) Isn't it time for us to dress?

Mrs. Ries.—I have put out everything; I can be ready in a few minutes.

Ries.—So have I, only . . . (He moves a step, then stands still again.) Oh! did I tell you that Klinger wishes to sell his villa out there? Or did I forget?

Mrs. Ries.—No; you told me.

Ries.—To-day I telephoned to ask how much he would sell it for. There is a garden attached, and a little wood—quite a small one. He wants 30,000 kroner. That's not dear—what?

Mrs. Ries.—Not if one had the means——

Ries.—Well, but we have the means.

Mrs. Ries.—We have? What should we want with a place out there?

Ries.—Not ourselves, perhaps. Svava might like it.

Mrs. Ries.—Svava?

Ries.—You know she has taken a great fancy to that house—and the situation is splendid! We shall pass the place to-day. Still, if you don't care for the idea, of course—— I have got my trunks at last. You really ought to look at them now. I mean at my presents. No? Oh! well then, I'll go and dress.

SCENE III.

Mrs. Ries. Svava comes in by the left near the foreground.

Mrs. Ries.—(Startled.) Are you there? They said you had gone out. Have you met no one?

Svava.—Whom should I have met? I haven't felt able to talk to any one—least of all to you. But now I would like so much to try, if you don't mind?

Mrs. Ries.—No.

Svava.—I don't quite know how to begin; there's so much to say. But I wish—I wish, first of all, to ask one question: How long have you known this? (*Mrs. Ries is silent. Gently:*) I'm sorry I asked. Only you can't wonder at my feeling upset. How could I be so terribly mistaken? Once before, and now again. I seem to have been brought up to make mistakes. I don't mean that as a reproach; I only mean that I'm not to blame myself. And yet, when I think how grandly I talked, and how severe I was! How could you let me? How could you be so cruel?

Mrs. Ries.—I gave you several hints, but they only made you more excited. As lately as yesterday——

Svava.—I'm beginning to see many things since yesterday. Perhaps this, too, will become clear, . . . one day. I only know that since yesterday everything at home here has grown bitter to me—everything—even the sound of the piano! This is what you meant, then, when you warned me not to be so arrogant.

I was to stoop as low as I could. You must stoop very low to be on a level with life.

Mrs. Ries.—O Svava!

Svava.—There is one safe rule. Do as the rest of the world! Then we have no right to complain.

Mrs. Ries.—No; but—

Svava.—To think that I never understood that before! I was like a simple child. I stood before a high mountain and wanted to push it away with my hands.

Mrs. Ries.—Yes.

Svava.—Still, one can go right away from it all. One can always do that. Why didn't you, mother? Since yesterday I understand what you have suffered, and yet you didn't go away. Why didn't you—at once—the same day? That first day must have been the hardest of all. I shall never understand.

Mrs. Ries.—Don't say that, Svava!

Svava.—I shall never understand! You are thinking of papa? Ah! . . . he is so kind-hearted, so lovable! No; I cannot speak of papa.

Mrs. Ries.—No one can realize it who hasn't had the experience! I mean, what it is possible to endure, when a house rests, like ours, on a secret. And the ingenuity which must be employed to conceal it! Oh, if you only knew to what I have descended! At last all one's ambition is swallowed up in a single aim: to know that the secret is well guarded. All else is nothing.

Svava.—But why act as you did? I don't wish to utter a word of reproach, but had it been the one whom I loved most in the world, then I could have borne it least of all!

Mrs. Ries.—You don't know what you are saying.

Svava.—Don't I? If he were even more; if he were the best, the noblest . . . oh, no! it would have been simply impossible; in such a case the discovery would have driven me mad.

Mrs. Ries.—Suppose I only bore it for the sake of my child.

Svava.—Oh, mother! I—

Mrs. Ries.—Hush! You were quite little then, and I didn't dare alone—

Svava.—Hush, hush!

SCENE IV.

As before. *Ries.*

Ries.—I say, this coat doesn't seem to fit well, does it? At the side, here? Or perhaps the back's not quite right—just here? What do you think? Is the lower part all right? The idea of a famous Parisian firm turning out an article of this sort! What are we coming to? And I was so certain of my bargain! It never does to be so confident. (He notices Svava, who has risen and moved toward the left.) Are you there? I thought you had gone out. I sent Alf to meet you. They said you had gone down to the shore. So you hadn't, after all? By the way, Svava! I was just speaking to mother about . . . don't you remember that villa of Klinger's? We shall pass it to-day—we shall pass it to-day. However, we can talk about that later. But now I must really use the little time we have left to show you what I brought with me from Paris. I have all the things ready, so it won't take more than a second. I will bring them all at once.

Svava.—I am going.

Mrs. Ries.—No; don't go!

Svava.—But I can't bear it.

Mrs. Ries.—Svava! what do you think I have had to bear?

Ries.—(From the next room.) Here I come! (He comes out with a garden hat on his head, and two shawls over his shoulders; two fans hang from his buttonhole. He carries several parcels.) Now you really can't say I think only of myself when I travel. If any one imagines that all these things are to be had at one and the same shop—well, he knows nothing at all about them. No, *they* deserve long and careful inspection. What do you say to this garden hat? (He takes it from his head.) A smart fellow, isn't he? (He lays it aside.) But now in these parcels— (Opening them.) "Beware of thine heart, for out of the heart come vain thoughts"—isn't that how it runs?—two, elegant, elegant—look! (He exhibits two ladies' hats.) Mother and daughter! Here is the mother—(He holds one of them up.)—

soft in tone, serious, like a moss rose with closed petals; the daughter, dazzling, fresh, and a little giddy. Can't you imagine these two hats jesting together in a box at the theatre? Between the acts of "On ne badine pas avec l'amour?" And these two fans—eh? A discreet accompaniment to the ladies' thoughts. This, in color and movement, conveys a certain suggestion of motherly pride—so! (He fans himself.) And this protests with some little vehemence against "his" having the assurance to pay attentions to another lady—so! (He fans himself.) Imagine it's a warm summer evening! Such a fan as this is as expressive as a guitar—piano, pizzicato! (He fans himself.) But, now, what do you say to my dress materials? With a dress made of this—(He names color and material.)—mother will look like a day in early September—the loveliest and most temperate season in the whole year.

(Svava can suppress her feelings no longer. Ries packs his things together hastily, and carries as much as he can into his room.)

Mrs. Ries.—You mustn't take it to heart so, or I shall give way, too! (Begins to cry.)

Svava.—No, I'll try! I'll try! But——

(Again bursts into tears.)

Mrs. Ries.—This will never do!

Svava.—I will control myself soon!

Mrs. Ries.—If you can't, we must put off the party.

Svava.—No, no! Anything rather than that. Trust to me.

Ries.—(Comes out of his room.) I see Alf coming. (With a glance at Svava.) Shall I ask him to go away?

Mrs. Ries.—I don't think it is necessary.

Ries.—He may come, then? (Svava nods assent.) Oh, thank you, darling! (He steps toward Svava, then stops, and withdraws silently.)

Mrs. Ries.—I will put everything out for you, and then send Marie to help you. (Svava goes up to her.) Try now to control yourself. (Exit.)

SCENE V.

Svava. Alf in frock coat, etc., enters on the right. Last of all, Ries. Svava draws back to the extreme left.

Alf.—(Goes a few steps toward her.) I suppose you know why I have come? If it rested with me, I would gladly have spared you. But if we are to be together at the party, we had better settle what line to take.

Svava.—Yes.

Alf.—I thought, if you have no objection, I would help your father to receive the guests. I could be a kind of steward, or something of that sort, so as to superintend the party from the first. Your father likes the idea. In that way I should be fully occupied, and we need seldom meet. Have you any objection?

Svava.—No.

Alf.—If, however, we are forced to meet, I'll soon remember something or other which has been forgotten. But I can't release you from the first dance.

Svava.—No, that is clear.

Alf.—I will try not to prolong your suffering. I will even try to be amusing!

Svava.—Yes, you must have a double share of good spirits.

Alf.—In such a case one can generally carry it through. I will do my best. But you must try as well.

Svava.—It's not quite the same for me.

Alf.—I propose that you simply copy me, and put off the serious part until after the party.

Svava.—Haven't we done with that? Is there still more to come?

Alf.—Yes; I certainly wish to defend myself! You surely won't condemn me unheard?

Svava.—I have heard. At any rate, I wish to hear no more.

Alf.—I dare say you don't wish to hear, but you must, for all that. Even a criminal is not sentenced without a hearing.

Svava.—I had no intention of sentencing any one.

Alf.—You have passed sentence, I can see.

Svava.—In that case my sentence has evidently done you no harm. You seem as unabashed as ever!

Alf.—Of course you expected me to appear before you in the

character of a penitent sinner? To fall at your feet with tears and contrition, and ask your forgiveness? You must really excuse me! That would simply be admitting that you had confided in one who is unworthy of you, and that slight I will not inflict on you or myself. I certainly do not believe that I am unworthy of you. Had I thought so, I would never have come here.

Svava.—You have come here, then, with nothing on your conscience?

Alf.—I won't say that; I may have had many things on my conscience. But at present they lie behind me; my hands are clean.

Svava.—Really! Since when, may I ask?

Alf.—That is no business of yours. But I can tell you of one day in my life which had tremendous consequences for me, and that was the day when I met you.

Svava.—No doubt I ought to feel flattered. You have nothing on your conscience, then. Nothing to explain.

Alf.—Plenty to explain! But, as I said before, we had better drop the subject for the present.

Svava.—I think so, too: we will drop the subject.

Alf.—Until you learn what is involved in this question.

Svava.—No, at once!

Alf.—Yes, for you don't understand in the least. This is not a question simply of myself or any other individual; therefore you have no right to pass sentence. Least of all can you put all the blame on me. That would be the most glaring injustice. Besides, it can't be helped: we must accept facts as they are. I see you don't understand. However, when you have learned to look into the question (and now it is your duty to look into it), then, and not before, it will be time enough for me to relate to you this little episode of mine, if you insist. I know beforehand that you will then trouble yourself no more about it.

Svava.—It's not that which troubles me now. You have quite misunderstood me. I am ashamed that you should have thought I meant that!

Alf.—If I have hurt your feelings, I beg you to remember that I feel hurt, too.

Svava.—You? I suppose, because I won't put up with it?

Alf.—You have nothing to put up with. If my past were not honorable, I should not stand here.

Svava.—We differ on that point. And you have known that from the first.

Alf.—Oh, that's it! I have deceived you, have I? Been false to you? Perhaps I have been laughing at you in my sleeve all along?

Svava.—Is that all you can say?

Alf.—You interfere in my private affairs; I feel hurt. You mistrust me; that hurts me, too. . . . But, I beg you, let us postpone all this!

Svava.—If it had been I? If I had come to you under similar circumstances? "My private affairs." "I feel hurt." "You mistrust me, and that hurts me, too." Suppose I had behaved as you have, lived the life you have lived?

Ries.—(Outside.) I see the boats putting in. We shall have them here in a minute! (He enters.) How are things going, children?

Svava.—Exactly as they ought.

Ries.—No; really? It's all being cleared up?

Svava.—Completely.

Ries.—No? I am glad! You both look in high spirits, too. I was sure you only wanted a few words together. Besides, who can doubt a man's word of honor? (He rushes to the piano, plays a few bars of a march, then darts into his room.)

Alf.—This is too bad! You know quite well that there was no question of such theories when we were engaged. I thought as little of my past as you of yours. Ever since our first long talk together we have belonged to each other. You know it was so. I see you can't deny it. As for my past, it can't have been very dreadful. It can't have left any deep traces; else you—you especially—would have avoided me instinctively. Instead of that, you felt drawn to me more strongly than to any other. I have it from your own lips; you told me so yourself. Our present relations are unnatural; you are not yourself; we are both in a false position. If only I might speak to you as I believe I can speak, I should convince you on the spot.

Svava.—Do you think so?

Alf.—Do I think so? I'm sure of it! Else I should not have been so confident from the first—nor so confident now. If I trusted you too implicitly—well, that is a fault which you must try to forgive! But my trust was not misplaced; I know you too well. Although we have only been such a short time together, I know you as well, nay, better, than any one else in the whole world! You told me that, too, with your own lips. I see you remember! What is the matter with you, Svava?

Svava.—You have not answered my question. O God! O God!

Alf.—Let us keep to the point. You must answer me first. How can any one who knows you as thoroughly as I, wish to deceive you, to be false to you? You ought to have more faith in me.

Svava.—This is too much! If it had been I—would you have had faith in me?

Alf.—How can I tell? You wouldn't have been yourself—but some one else.

Svava.—Well, that is just what you have become—some one else! That is the dreadful part of it!

Alf.—Hush, hush! You shall soon see that I am the same, just the same! And besides, you wouldn't feel it so deeply if you really thought me different. (The Trio is heard in the distance.)

Ries.—(Comes out of his room and speaks in a whisper.) The Trio! Do you hear it? I had forgotten the flag. (He quickly crosses the room, takes the furled flag, and hastens out.) I hope I shall be able to unfurl the thing easily, else . . . (Exit. Svava takes up her hat and gloves.)

Alf.—You're not going? Just when the music reminds us of all our happiness during the last few days? Think of what really brought us together. Surely that was no mistake. The work we resolved to carry on together; the work we talked over so often. Can you live without it? I can't; and I see you can't either. Let us devote our future to it. In that work I find my real self. You once told me so, and you were quite right.

Svava.—How can I reconcile the two? As long as I live, I shall never understand how a man can be so double. It is horrible!

Alf.—Haven't we all two natures, then?

Svava.—Two——?

Alf.—Yes; you, as much as I. Why do you look at me like that? I know what I'm saying. We were attracted to each other by natural affinity—an affinity so strong as to annul any tendencies in which we differed. Did you ever shrink from me? No: you felt drawn toward me. Now you are hiding your real self, and that is why you are misled. You ought to be on your guard against these absurd theories, not against me.

Svava.—No—no, this is too much! Even if it were true, you have no right to use such words to me. I have not two natures, and I will never belong to a man who can stoop to be so double.

Alf.—Don't you suppose that whenever I drew you to me I could tell how willing you were? A man cannot help knowing what influence he has over a woman.

Svava.—Not another word!

Alf.—Yes; you can't deny it! To renounce your own nature now would be as great a sin as any I have committed.

Svava.—You revolt me!

Alf.—Are you still so deeply stirred by a word from me? You see—how entirely you are mine! I know it, you know it yourself. Only yesterday——

Svava.—Do you dare to remind me of yesterday?

Alf.—Dare? Only yesterday—here, on this very spot—you proved to me that you have two natures; you changed color; you trembled, when I said that your arm had clung to my neck, and to no other, no other in the whole world!

Svava.—Yes! and yours to a hundred others!

(She flings her glove in his face and rushes off. *Alf* stands dazed for a moment and hastens from the scene.)

Ries.—(Coming out of his room.) I congratulate you! I congratulate you!

(He stands astonished and casts a puzzled look on all sides.)

(The curtain falls.)

GHOSTS
(A FAMILY DRAMA)

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

Translated by

WILLIAM ARCHER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MRS. HELEN ALVING, widow of Captain Alving.

OSWALD ALVING, her son, a painter.

PASTOR MANDERS.

JACOB ENGSTRAND, a carpenter, somewhat lame.

REGINA ENGSTRAND, Mrs. Alving's maid.

*The action takes place at Mrs. Alving's country house, a large fiord in
Norway.*

ACT I.

A large garden-room with conservatory at back, a door at the left, and two doors at the right. In the middle a round table with books and periodicals, with chairs around it. In the left foreground a sofa and work-table. Through the glass wall of the conservatory can be seen a gloomy landscape, veiled with rain. Engstrand is standing by the garden door. Regina, with a garden syringe, hinders him from advancing.

Regina.—(In a low voice.) What do you want? Stop where you are. You are positively dripping.

Engstrand.—It's the Lord's own rain, my girl.

Regina.—It's the devil's rain, I say.

Engstrand.—Lord! how you talk, Regina. (Limps a few steps forward into the room.) What I wanted to say was this—

Regina.—Don't clatter so with that foot of yours, I tell you! The young master is asleep upstairs.

Engstrand.—Asleep? In the middle of the day?

Regina.—It's no business of yours.

Engstrand.—I was out on the loose last night—

Regina.—I can quite believe that.

Engstrand.—Yes, we're weak vessels, we poor mortals, my girl—

Regina.—So it seems.

Engstrand.—And temptations are manifold in this world, you see; but all the same, I was hard at work, God knows, at half-past five this morning.

Regina.—Very well; only be off now; I won't stop here and have rendezvous' with you.

Engstrand.—What is it you won't have?

Regina.—I won't have anyone find you here; so just you go about your business.

Engstrand.—(Advances a step or two.) Blest if I go before I've had a talk with you. This afternoon I shall have finished my work down at the school-house, and then I shall take to-night's boat and be off home to the town.

Regina.—(Mutters.) A pleasant journey to you.

Engstrand.—Thank you, my child. To-morrow the asylum is to be opened, and then there'll be fine doings, no doubt, and plenty of intoxicating drink going, you know. And nobody shall say of Jacob Engstrand that he can't keep out of temptation's way.

Regina.—Oh!

Engstrand.—You see, there are to be any number of swells here to-morrow. Pastor Manders is expected from town, too.

Regina.—He's coming to-day.

Engstrand.—There! you see. And I should be cursedly sorry if he found out anything to my disadvantage, don't you understand?

Regina.—Oh! is that your game?

Engstrand.—Is what my game?

Regina.—(Looking hard at him.) What trick are you going to play on Pastor Manders?

Engstrand.—Hush! hush! Are you crazy? Do I want to play any trick on Pastor Manders? Oh, no! Pastor Manders has been far too kind to me for that. But I just wanted to tell you, you know—that I mean to set off home again to-night.

Regina.—The sooner the better, for my part.

Engstrand.—Yes. But I want to take you with me, Regina.

Regina.—(Open-mouthed.) You want me—— What are you talking about?

Engstrand.—I want to take you home, I say.

Regina.—(Scornfully.) Never in this world shall you get me home with you.

Engstrand.—We shall see about that.

Regina.—Yes, you may be sure we shall see about it! I, who have been brought up by a lady like Mrs. Alving! I, who am treated almost as a daughter here! Is it me you want to go home with you?—to a house like yours? For shame!

Engstrand.—What the devil do you mean? Do you set yourself up against your father, girl?

Regina.—(Mutters without looking at him.) You've said often enough that I was no child of yours.

Engstrand.—Stuff! Why should you trouble about that?

Regina.—Haven't you many a time sworn at me and called me a—— Fi done!

Engstrand.—Curse me, now, if I ever used such an ugly word.

Regina.—Oh! I know quite well what word you used.

Engstrand.—Well, but that was only when I was a bit on, don't you know? H'm! Temptations are manifold in this world, Regina.

Regina.—Ugh!

Engstrand.—And when your mother rode her high horse, I had to hit upon something to twit her with. She was always setting up for a fine lady. (Mimics.) "Let me go, Engstrand; let me be. Remember I've been three years in Chamberlain Alving's family at Rosenvold." (Laughs.) Mercy on us! She never could forget that the captain was made a chamberlain while she was in service here.

Regina.—Poor mother! you very soon worried her into her grave.

Engstrand.—(Turns on his heel.) Oh, of course. I am to be blamed for everything.

Regina.—(Turns away; half aloud.) Ugh! and that leg, too!

Engstrand.—What do you say, girl?

Regina.—Pied de mouton.

Engstrand.—Is that English, eh?

Regina.—Yes.

Engstrand.—Oh, ah; you've picked up some learning out here; and that may come in useful now, Regina.

Regina.—(After a short silence.) What do you want with me in town?

Engstrand.—Can you ask what a father wants with his only child? Am I not a lonely and forsaken widower?

Regina.—Oh! don't try on any nonsense like that! Why do you want me?

Engstrand.—Well, let me tell you, I've been thinking of starting a new line of business.

Regina.—(Contemptuously.) You've tried that often enough, and never done any good.

Engstrand.—Yes, but this time you shall see, Regina! Devil take me——

Regina.—(Stamps.) Don't swear!

Engstrand.—Hush, hush; you're right enough there, my girl. What I wanted to say was just this—I've laid by a very tidy pile from this Orphanage job.

Regina.—Have you? That's a good thing for you.

Engstrand.—What can a man spend his ha'pence on here in the country?

Regina.—Well, what then?

Engstrand.—Why, you see, I thought of putting the money into some paying speculation. I thought of a sort of sailors' tavern——

Regina.—Horrid!

Engstrand.—A regular high-class affair, of course; not a mere pigstye for common sailors. No! damn it! it would be for captains and mates, and—and—all these swells, you know.

Regina.—And I was to——

Engstrand.—You were to help, to be sure. Only for appearance sake, you understand. Devil a bit of hard work shall you have, my girl. You shall do exactly what you like.

Regina.—Oh, indeed!

Engstrand.—But there must be a petticoat in the house. That's as clear as daylight. For I want to have it a little

lively in the evenings, with singing and dancing, and so forth. You must remember they are weary wanderers on the ocean of life. (Nearer.) Now, don't be stupid and stand in your own light, Regina. What can become of you out here? What good is it to you that your mistress has given you a lot of learning? You're to look after the children at the new Orphanage, I hear. Is that the sort of thing for you, eh? Are you so desperately bent upon wearing yourself out for the sake of the dirty brats?

Regina.—No; if things go as I want them to, then—well, there's no saying—there's no saying.

Engstrand.—What do you mean by "there's no saying?"

Regina.—Never you mind. Is it a great deal of money you've saved up here?

Engstrand.—What with one thing and another, a matter of seven or eight hundred crowns.

Regina.—That's not so bad.

Engstrand.—It's enough to make a start with, my girl.

Regina.—Aren't you thinking of giving me any of that money?

Engstrand.—No, I'm damned if I am!

Regina.—Aren't you thinking of sending me so much as a scrap of stuff for a new dress?

Engstrand.—If you'll come to town with me, you can get dresses enough.

Regina.—Pooh! I can do that on my own account if I want to.

Engstrand.—No; a father's guiding hand is what you want, Regina. Now, I can have a capital little house in Little Harbor street. I won't need much ready money, and it could be a sort of sailors' home, you know.

Regina.—But I will not live with you. I have nothing whatever to do with you. Be off!

Engstrand.—You wouldn't remain long with me, my girl. No such luck! If you knew how to play your cards, such a fine girl as you've grown in the last year or two—

Regina.—Well?

Engstrand.—It wouldn't be long before some mate came in your way, or it might even be a captain——

Regina.—I won't marry anyone of that sort. Sailors have no savoir vivre.

Engstrand.—What haven't they got? ·

Regina.—I know what sailors are, I tell you. They're not the sort of people to marry.

Engstrand.—Then never mind about marrying them. You can make it pay all the same. (More confidentially.) He—the Englishman—the man with the yacht—he gave three hundred dollars, he did; and she wasn't a bit handsomer than you are.

Regina.—(Going toward him.) Out you go!

Engstrand.—(Falling back.) Come, come! You're not going to strike me, I hope.

Regina.—Yes, if you begin to talk about mother I shall strike you. Get away with you, I say. (Drives him back toward the garden door.) And don't bang the doors. Young Mr. Alving——

Engstrand.—He's asleep. Yes, I know. It's curious how you're taken up about young Mr. Alving. (More softly.) Oho! it surely can't be he that——

Regina.—Be off, and quickly! you're crazy, I tell you! No, don't go that way. There comes Pastor Manders. Down the kitchen stairs with you.

Engstrand.—(Toward the right.) Yes, yes, I'm going. But just you talk to him that's coming there. He's the man to tell you what a child owes to its father. For I am your father all the same, you know. I can prove it from the church register. (He goes out through the second door to the right, which Regina has opened, and fastens again after him. Regina glances hastily at herself in the mirror, dusts herself with her pocket-handkerchief and settles her collar; then she busies herself with the flowers.)

Manders.—(In an overcoat, with an umbrella, and with a small travelling-bag on a strap over his shoulder, comes through the garden door into the conservatory.) Good-morning, Miss Engstrand.

Regina.—(Turning round, surprised and pleased.) No, really! Good-morning, Pastor Manders. Is the steamer in already?

Manders.—It's just in. (Enters the sitting-room.) Terrible weather we've been having lately.

Regina.—(Follows him.) It's such blessed weather for the country, sir.

Manders.—Yes, you're quite right. We townspeople think too little about that. (He begins to take off his overcoat.)

Regina.—Oh! mayn't I help you? There! Why! how wet it is! I'll just hang it up in the hall. And your umbrella, too. I'll open it and let it dry. (She goes out with the things through the second door on the right. Mr. Manders takes his travelling-bag off and lays it and his hat on a chair. Meanwhile Regina comes in again.)

Manders.—Ah! it's a comfort to get safe under cover. Well, is all going on well here?

Regina.—Yes, thank you, sir.

Manders.—You have your hands full, I suppose, in preparation for to-morrow?

Regina.—Yes, there's plenty to do, of course.

Manders.—And Mrs. Alving is at home, I trust?

Regina.—Oh, dear, yes. She's just upstairs looking after the young master's chocolate.

Manders.—Yes, by-the-bye—I heard down at the pier that Oswald had arrived.

Regina.—Yes; he came the day before yesterday. We didn't expect him before to-day.

Manders.—Quite strong and well, I hope?

Regina.—Yes, thank you, quite; but dreadfully tired with the journey. He has made one rush all the way from Paris. I believe he came all the way in one train. I believe he is sleeping a little now; so perhaps we'd better talk a little quietly.

Manders.—Hush!—as quietly as you please.

Regina.—(Arranging an arm-chair beside the table.) Now, do sit down, Pastor Manders, and make yourself comfortable.

(He sits down; she puts a footstool under his feet.) There! are you comfortable now, sir?

Manders.—Thanks, thanks, I am most comfortable. (Looks at her.) Do you know, Miss Engstrand, I positively think you have grown since I last saw you.

Regina.—Do you think so, sir? Mrs. Alving says my figure has developed, too.

Manders.—Developed? Well, perhaps a little; just enough. (Short pause.)

Regina.—Shall I tell Mrs. Alving you are here?

Manders.—Thanks, thanks, there's no hurry, my dear child. By-the-bye, Regina, my good girl, just tell me, how is your father getting on out here?

Regina.—Oh, thank you, he is getting on well enough.

Manders.—He called upon me last time he was in town.

Regina.—Did he, indeed? He's always so glad of a chance of talking to you, sir.

Manders.—And you often look in upon him at his work, I dare say.

Regina.—I? Oh, of course, when I have time, I—

Manders.—Your father is not a man of strong character, Miss Engstrand. He stands terribly in need of a guiding hand.

Regina.—Oh, yes; I dare say he does.

Manders.—He needs to have someone near him whom he cares for, and whose judgment he respects. He frankly admitted that when he last came to see me.

Regina.—Yes; he has said something of the sort to me. But I don't know whether Mrs. Alving can spare me; especially now, when we have got the new Orphanage to manage. And, then, I should be so sorry to leave Mrs. Alving; she has always been so kind to me.

Manders.—But a daughter's duty, my good girl— Of course, we must first get your mistress' consent.

Regina.—But I don't know whether it would be quite proper for me, at my age, to keep house for a single man.

Manders.—What! my dear Miss Engstrand! When the man is your own father,

Regina.—Yes, that may be, but, all the same—— Now, if it were in a thoroughly respectable house, and with a real gentleman——

Manders.—But, my dear Regina——

Regina.—One I could really love and respect, and be a daughter to——

Manders.—Yes, but my dear, good child——

Regina.—Then I should be glad to go to town. It's very lonely out here; and you know yourself, sir, what it is to be alone in the world. And so much I can say for myself, I am both quick and willing. Don't you know of any such place for me, sir?

Manders.—I? No, certainly not.

Regina.—But, dear, dear sir, do remember me if——

Manders.—(Rising.) Yes, yes, certainly, Miss Engstrand.

Regina.—For if I——

Manders.—Will you be so good as to fetch your mistress?

Regina.—I will, at once, sir. (She goes out to the left.)

Manders.—(Goes two or three times up and down the room, stands a moment in the background with his hands behind his back and looks out over the garden. Then he returns to the table, takes up a book and looks at the title-page; starts and looks at several.) H'm—indeed!

Mrs. Alving enters by the door on the left; she is followed by Regina, who immediately goes out through the first door on the right.

Mrs. Alving.—(Holds out her hand.) Welcome, my dear pastor.

Manders.—How do you do, Mrs. Alving? Here I am, as I promised.

Mrs. Alving.—Always punctual to the minute.

Manders.—You may believe it wasn't so easy for me to get away. With all the boards and committees I belong to——

Mrs. Alving.—That makes it all the kinder of you to come so early. Now we can get through our business before dinner. But where is your luggage?

Manders.—(Quickly.) I left it down at the inn. I shall sleep there to-night.

Mrs. Alving.—(Suppressing a smile.) Are you really not to be persuaded, even now, to pass the night under my roof?

Manders.—No, no, Mrs. Alving; many thanks. I shall stay down there, as usual. It is so convenient for starting again.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, you must have your own way. But I really should have thought that we two old people——

Manders.—Now, you're making fun of me. Ah! to be sure! this is a joyful day for you. You have got to-morrow's festival to look forward to, and then you have got Oswald home again.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; you can think what a delight it is to me. It is more than two years since he was last home. And now he has promised to stay with me all winter.

Manders.—Has he, really? That's very nice and dutiful of him. For I can well believe that life in Rome and Paris has far more attractions.

Mrs. Alving.—True. But here he has his mother, you see. My own darling boy, he hasn't forgotten his love for his mother!

Manders.—It would be grievous, indeed, if absence and working at art and that sort of thing were to blunt his natural feeling.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, you may well say so. But there is nothing of that sort to fear in him. I am quite curious to see if you would know him again. He will be down presently; he's upstairs, just now, resting a little on the sofa. But do sit down, my dear pastor.

Manders.—Thank you. Then it's quite convenient for you?

Mrs. Alving.—Certainly. (She sits by the table.)

Manders.—Very well. Then you shall see—— (He goes to the chair where his travelling-bag lies, takes out a packet of papers, sits down on the opposite side of the table and tries to find a clear space for the papers.) Now, to begin with, here is—— (Breaking off.) Tell me, Mrs. Alving, how do these books come here?

Mrs. Alving.—These books? They are books I am reading.

Manders.—Do you read this sort of literature?

Mrs. Alving.—Certainly I do.

Manders.—Do you feel yourself better or happier for reading of this kind?

Mrs. Alving.—I feel myself, so to speak, more secure.

Manders.—That's strange. How do you mean?

Mrs. Alving.—Well, I seem to find explanation and confirmation of all sorts of things I myself have been thinking. For that is the wonderful part of it, Pastor Manders; there is really nothing new in these books, nothing but what most people think and believe. Only most people either do not formulate it to themselves, or else keep quiet about it.

Manders.—Great heavens! Do you really believe that most people——

Mrs. Alving.—I do, indeed.

Manders.—But surely not in this country? Not here with us?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, certainly, with us, too.

Manders.—Well, I really must say——

Mrs. Alving.—For the rest, what do you object to in these books?

Manders.—Object to in them? You surely don't suppose that I have nothing to do but study such productions as these?

Mrs. Alving.—That is to say, you know nothing of what you are condemning.

Manders.—I have read enough about these writings to disapprove of them.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; but your own opinion——

Manders.—My dear Mrs. Alving, there are many occasions in life where one must rely upon others. It is so in this world; and it is a good thing. How could society get on otherwise?

Mrs. Alving.—Well, dare say you are right there.

Manders.—Besides, I, of course, don't deny that there may be much that is interesting in such books. Nor can I blame you for wishing to keep up with the intellectual movements which are said to be going on in the great world, where you have let your son pass so much of his life. But——

Mrs. Alving.—But?

Manders.—(Lowering his voice.) But one shouldn't talk about it, Mrs. Alving. One is certainly not bound to account to everybody for what one reads and thinks within one's own four walls.

Mrs. Alving.—Of course not; I quite think so.

Manders.—Only think, now, how you are bound to consider the interests of this Orphanage which you decided on founding at a time when your opinions on spiritual matters were very different from what they are now—so far as I can judge.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, yes; I quite admit that. But it was about the Orphanage—

Manders.—It was about the Orphanage we were to speak; yes. All I say is: prudence, my dear lady! And now we'll get to business. (Opens the packet, and takes out a number of papers.) Do you see these?

Mrs. Alving.—The documents?

Manders.—All—and in perfect order. I can tell you it was hard work to get them in time. I had to put on strong pressure. The authorities are almost painfully scrupulous when you want them to come to the point. But here they are at last. (Looks through the bundle.) See! here is the formal deed of gift of the parcel of ground known as Solvik in the Manor of Rosen-vold, with all the newly constructed buildings, school-rooms, master's house, and chapel. And here is the legal fiat for the endowment and for the regulations of the Institution. Will you look at them? (Reads.) "Regulations for the Children's Home to be known as 'Captain Alving's Foundation.' "

Mrs. Alving.—(Looks long at the paper.) So there it is.

Manders.—I have chosen the name "Captain" rather than "Chamberlain." Captain looks less pretentious.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, yes; just as you think best.

Manders.—And here you have the bank account of the capital lying at interest to cover the current expenses of the Orphanage.

Mrs. Alving.—Thank you; but please keep it—it will be more convenient.

Manders.—With pleasure. I think we will leave the money in the bank for the present. The interest is certainly not what we could wish—four per cent. and six months' notice of withdrawal. If a good mortgage could be found later on—of course it must be a first mortgage and an undoubted security—then we could consider the matter.

Mrs. Alving.—Certainly, my dear Pastor Manders. You are the best judge in these things.

Manders.—I will keep my eyes open, at any rate. But now there is one thing more which I have several times been intending to ask you.

Mrs. Alving.—And what is that?

Manders.—Shall the Orphanage buildings be insured or not?

Mrs. Alving.—Of course they must be insured.

Manders.—Well, stop a minute, Mrs. Alving. Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

Mrs. Alving.—I have everything insured; buildings and movables and stock and crops.

Manders.—Of course you have—on your own estate. And so have I—of course. But here, you see, it is quite another matter. The Orphanage is to be consecrated, as it were, to a higher purpose.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, but that's no reason——

Manders.—For my own part, I should not see the smallest impropriety in guarding against all contingencies——

Mrs. Alving.—No, I should think not.

Manders.—But what is the general feeling in the neighborhood? You, of course, know better than I.

Mrs. Alving.—H'm—the general feeling——

Manders.—Is there any considerable number of people—really responsible people—who might be scandalized?

Mrs. Alving.—What do you mean by "really responsible people?"

Manders.—Well, I mean men in such independent and influential positions that one cannot help allowing some weight to their opinions.

Mrs. Alving.—There are several people of that sort here who would very likely be shocked if——

Manders.—There, you see! In town we have many such people. Think of all my colleague's adherents! People would be only too ready to interpret our action as a sign that neither you nor I had the right faith in a Higher Providence.

Mrs. Alving.—But so far as you are concerned, my dear Pastor, you have, at least, the consciousness that——

Manders.—Yes, I know—I know; my conscience would be quite easy, that is true enough. But nevertheless we should not escape grave misinterpretation; and that might very likely react upon the Orphanage, and restrict its usefulness.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, if that were to be the case, then——

Manders.—Nor can I lose sight of the difficult—I may even say painful—position I might perhaps get into. In the leading circles of the town people are much taken up about this Orphanage. It is, of course, founded partly for the benefit of the town, as well; and it is to be hoped it will, in no inconsiderable degree, result in lightening our Poor Rates. But as I have been your adviser, and have had the business matters in my hands, I cannot but fear that I may have to bear the brunt of fanaticism——

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! you mustn't run the risk of that.

Manders.—To say nothing of the attacks that would assuredly be made upon me in certain papers and periodicals, which——

Mrs. Alving.—Enough, my dear Pastor Manders. That consideration is quite decisive.

Manders.—Then you do not wish the Orphanage insured?

Mrs. Alving.—No. We will let it alone.

Manders.—(Leaning back in his chair.) But if a misfortune were to happen?—one can never tell. Would you be able to make good the damage?

Mrs. Alving.—No; I tell you plainly I should do nothing of the kind.

Manders.—Then I must tell you, Mrs. Alving, it is really no small responsibility we are taking upon ourselves.

Mrs. Alving.—But do you think we can do anything else?

Manders.—No, that is just the thing; we really can do nothing else. We must not expose ourselves to false interpretation; and we have no right whatever to give offence to our neighbors.

Mrs. Alving.—You, as a clergyman, certainly should not.

Manders.—And I really think, too, we may trust that an institution of this kind has fortune on its side; in fact, that it stands under a Special Providence.

Mrs. Alving.—Let us hope so, Pastor Manders.

Manders.—Then we will let the matter alone.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, certainly.

Manders.—Very well. Just as you think best. (Makes a note.) Then—no insurance.

Mrs. Alving.—It is rather curious that you should just happen to mention the matter to-day.

Manders.—I have often thought of asking you about it—

Mrs. Alving.—For we very nearly had a fire down there yesterday.

Manders.—You don't say so.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, it was of no importance. A heap of shavings had caught fire in the carpenter's workshop.

Manders.—Where Engstrand works?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. They say he's often very careless with matches.

Manders.—He has so many things in his head, that man—so many temptations. Thank God, he is now striving to lead a decent life, I hear.

Mrs. Alving.—Indeed! Who says so?

Manders.—He himself assures me of it. And he is certainly a capital workman.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, yes; so long as he is sober.

Manders.—Yes, that's a sad weakness. But he is often driven to it by his bad leg, he says. Last time he was in town I was really touched by him. He came to me and thanked me so warmly for having got him work here, so that he might be near Regina.

Mrs. Alving.—He doesn't see much of her.

Manders.—Oh, yes. He has a talk with her every day. He told me so himself.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, it may be so.

Manders.—He feels so clearly that he needs someone to hold him back when temptation comes. That is what I can't help liking about Jacob Engstrand; he comes to you helplessly, accusing himself and confessing his own weakness. The last time he was talking to me— Believe me, Mrs. Alving, supposing it were a real necessity for him to have Regina home again—

Mrs. Alving.—(Rising hastily.) Regina!

Manders.—You must not set yourself against it.

Mrs. Alving.—Indeed I shall set myself against it. And besides, Regina is to have a position in the Orphanage.

Manders.—But, after all, remember he's her father—

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! I know best what sort of a father he has been to her. No! she shall never go to him with my good-will.

Manders.—(Rising.) My dear lady, don't take the matter so warmly. You misjudge Engstrand sadly. You seem to be quite terrified—

Mrs. Alving.—(More quietly.) It doesn't matter. I have taken Regina into my house, and there she shall stay. (Listens.) Hush, my dear Mr. Manders; don't say any more about it. (Her face lights up with gladness.) Listen! there is Oswald coming down the stairs. Now we will think of no one but him.

Oswald Alving.—(In a light overcoat, hat in hand, and smoking a large meerschaum, enters through the door on the left; standing in the doorway.) Oh! I beg your pardon; I thought you were sitting in the office. (Comes forward.) Good-morning, Pastor Manders!

Manders.—(Staring.) Ah——! How strange——!

Mrs. Alving.—Well, now what do you say to this young man, Mr. Manders?

Manders.—I say—I say—why! is it really——?

Oswald.—Yes, it is really the Prodigal Son, sir.

Manders.—(Protesting.) My dear young friend——

Oswald.—Well, then, the reclaimed Son.

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald is thinking of the time when you were so much opposed to his being a painter.

Manders.—To our human eyes many a step seems dubious which afterward proves—— (Wrings his hand.) Anyhow, welcome, welcome home. Why, my dear Oswald—I suppose I may call you by your Christian name?

Oswald.—Yes; what else should you call me?

Manders.—Very good. What I wanted to say was this, my dear Oswald—you must not believe that I utterly condemn the artist's calling. I have no doubt there are many who can keep their inner self unharmed in that profession, as in any other.

Oswald.—Let us hope so.

Mrs. Alving.—(Beaming with delight.) I know one who has kept both his inner and outer self unharmed. Only look at him, Mr. Manders.

Oswald.—(Moves restlessly about the room.) Yes, yes, my dear mother; let's say no more about it.

Manders.—Why, certainly—it can't be denied. And you have begun to make a name for yourself already. The newspapers have often spoken of you, and most favorably. By the bye, just lately they haven't mentioned you so often, I fancy.

Oswald.—(Up in the conservatory.) I have not been able to paint so much lately.

Mrs. Alving.—Even a painter needs a little rest now and then.

Manders.—I can quite believe it. And, meanwhile, he can be gathering his forces and preparing himself for some great work.

Oswald.—Yes. Mother, will dinner soon be ready?

Mrs. Alving.—In less than half an hour. He has a capital appetite, thank God.

Manders.—And a taste for tobacco, too.

Oswald.—I found my father's pipe in my room, and so——

Manders.—Aha! then that accounts for it.

Mrs. Alving.—For what?

Manders.—When Oswald stood there in the doorway, with the pipe in his mouth, I could have sworn I saw his father, large as life.

Oswald.—No, really?

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! how can you say so? Oswald takes after me.

Manders.—Yes, but there is an expression about the corners of the mouth—something about the lips that reminds one exactly of Alving; at any rate, now that he is smoking.

Mrs. Alving.—Not in the least. Oswald has rather a clerical curve about his mouth, I think.

Manders.—Yes, yes; some of my colleagues have much the same look.

Mrs. Alving.—But put your pipe away, my dear boy; I won't have smoking in here.

Oswald.—(Does so.) By all means. I only wanted to try it; for I once smoked it when I was a child.

Mrs. Alving.—You?

Oswald.—Yes; I was quite small at the time. I recollect I came up to father's room one evening when he was in great spirits.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! you can't recollect anything of those times.

Oswald.—Yes. I recollect distinctly. He took me up on his knees, and gave me the pipe. "Smoke, boy," he said; "smoke away, boy." And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was growing quite pale, and the perspiration stood in great drops on my forehead. Then he burst out laughing heartily.

Manders.—That was most extraordinary.

Mrs. Alving.—My dear friend, it is only something Oswald has dreamt.

Oswald.—No, mother, I assure you I haven't dreamt it. For—don't you remember this?—you came and carried me out into the nursery. Then I was sick, and I saw that you were crying. Did father often play such pranks?

Manders.—In his youth he overflowed with the joy of life——

Oswald.—And nevertheless he managed to do so much in the world; so much that was good and useful; and he died so young, too.

Manders.—Yes, you have indeed inherited the name of an active and worthy man, my dear Oswald Alving. No doubt it will act as a spur to you.

Oswald.—It ought to, indeed.

Manders.—It was good of you to come home for to-morrow's ceremony in his honor.

Oswald.—I could do no less for my father.

Mrs. Alving.—And I am to keep him so long! that is the best of all.

Manders.—You are going to stop at home through the winter, I hear.

Oswald.—My stay is indefinite, sir. But, oh! how delightful it is to be at home again!

Mrs. Alving.—(Beaming.) Yes, isn't it?

Manders.—(Looking sympathetically at him.) You went out into the world early, my dear Oswald.

Oswald.—I did. I sometimes wonder whether it was not too early.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, not at all. A healthy lad is all the better for it; especially when he's an only child. He ought not to hang on at home with mother and father and get spoilt.

Manders.—It's a very difficult question, Mrs. Alving. A child's proper place is, and must be, the home of his fathers.

Oswald.—There I quite agree with you, Pastor Manders.

Manders.—Only look at your own son—there is no reason why we shouldn't say it in his presence—what has the consequence been for him? He is six or seven and twenty, and has never had the opportunity of learning what home life really is.

Oswald.—I beg your pardon, Pastor; there you're quite mistaken.

Manders.—Indeed? I thought you had lived almost exclusively in artistic circles.

Oswald.—So I have.

Manders.—And chiefly among the younger artists.

Oswald.—Why, certainly.

Manders.—But I thought few of these young fellows could afford to set up house and support a family.

Oswald.—There are many who can't afford to marry, sir.

Manders.—Yes; that's just what I say.

Oswald.—But they can have a home for all that. And several of them have, as a matter of fact; and very pleasant, comfortable homes they are, too. (Mrs. Alving follows with breathless interest; nods, but says nothing.)

Manders.—But I am not talking of bachelors' quarters. By a "home" I understand the home of a family, where a man lives with his wife and children.

Oswald.—Yes; or with his children and his children's mother.

Manders.—(Starts; clasps his hands.) But good heavens—!

Oswald.—Well?

Manders.—Lives with his—his children's mother!

Oswald.—Yes. Would you have him turn his children's mother out of doors?

Manders.—Then it is illicit relations you are talking of. Irregular marriages, as people call them!

Oswald.—I have never noticed anything particularly irregular about the life these people lead.

Manders.—But how is it possible that a—a young man or young woman with any decent principles can endure to live in that way?—in the eyes of all the world!

Oswald.—What are they to do? A poor young artist—a poor girl. It costs a lot of money to get married. What are they to do?

Manders.—What are they to do? Let me tell you, Mr. Alving, what they ought to do. They ought to exercise self-restraint from the first; that's what they ought to do.

Oswald.—Such talk as that won't go far with warm-blooded young people, over head and ears in love.

Mrs. Alving.—No; it wouldn't go far.

Manders.—(Continuing.) How can the authorities tolerate such things? Allow it to go on in the light of day? (To Mrs. Alving.) Had I not cause to be deeply concerned about your son? In circles where open immorality prevails, and has even a sort of prestige—!

Oswald.—Let me tell you, sir, that I have been a constant Sunday-guest in one or two such irregular homes——

Manders.—On Sunday of all days!

Oswald.—Isn't that the day to enjoy one's self? Well, never have I heard an offensive word, and still less have I ever witnessed anything that could be called immoral. No; do you know when and where I have found immorality in artistic circles?

Manders.—No! Thank heaven, I don't!

Oswald.—Well, then, allow me to inform you. I have met with it when one or other of our pattern husbands and fathers has come to Paris to have a look round on his own account, and has done the artists the honor of visiting their humble haunts. They knew what was what. These gentlemen could tell us all about places and things we had never dreamt of.

Manders.—What? Do you mean to say that respectable men from home here would——

Oswald.—Have you never heard these respectable men, when they got home again, talking about the way in which immorality was running rampant abroad?

Manders.—Yes, of course.

Mrs. Alving.—I have, too.

Oswald.—Well, you may take their word for it. They know what they are talking about! (Presses his hands to his head.) Oh! that that great, free, glorious life out there should be defiled in such a way!

Mrs. Alving.—You must not get excited, Oswald. You will do yourself harm.

Oswald.—Yes; you are quite right, mother. It's not good for me. You see, I'm wretchedly worn out. I'll go for a little turn before dinner. Excuse me, Pastor; I know you can't take my point of view; but I couldn't help speaking out. (He goes out through the second door to the right.)

Mrs. Alving.—My poor boy!

Manders.—You may well say so. Then that's what it has come to with him!

Mrs. Alving.—(Looks at him silently.)

Manders.—(Walking up and down.) He called himself the Prodigal Son—alas! alas!

Mrs. Alving.—(Continues looking at him.)

Manders.—And what do you say to all this?

Mrs. Alving.—I say that Oswald was right in every word.

Manders.—(Stands still.) Right! right! In such principles!

Mrs. Alving.—Here, in my loneliness, I have come to the same way of thinking, Pastor Manders. But I have never dared to touch upon the matter. Well! now my boy shall speak for me.

Manders.—You are much to be pitied, Mrs. Alving. But now I must speak seriously to you. And now it is no longer your business manager and adviser, your own and your late husband's early friend, who stands before you. It is the priest—the priest who stood before you in the moment of your life when you had gone most astray.

Mrs. Alving.—And what has the priest to say to me?

Manders.—I will first stir up your memory a little. The time is well chosen. To-morrow will be the tenth anniversary of your husband's death. To-morrow the memorial in his honor will be unveiled. To-morrow I shall have to speak to the whole assembled multitude. But to-day I will speak to you alone.

Mrs. Alving.—Very well, Pastor Manders. Speak.

Manders.—Do you remember that after less than a year of married life you stood on the verge of an abyss? That you forsook your house and home? That you fled from your husband? Yes, Mrs. Alving—fled, fled, and refused to return to him, however much he begged and prayed of you?

Mrs. Alving.—Have you forgotten how infinitely miserable I was in that first year?

Manders.—It is only the spirit of rebellion that craves for happiness in this life. What right have we human beings to

happiness? No; we have to do our duty! And your duty was to hold firmly to the man you had once chosen and to whom you were bound by a holy tie.

Mrs. Alving.—You know very well what sort of life Alving was then leading—what excesses he was guilty of.

Manders.—I know very well what rumors there were about him, and I am the last to approve the life he led in his young days, if report did not wrong him. But a wife is not to be her husband's judge. It was your duty to bear with humility the cross which a Higher Power had, for your own good, laid upon you. But instead of that you rebelliously cast away the cross, desert the backslider whom you should have supported and—nearly succeed in ruining other people's reputation into the bargain.

Mrs. Alving.—Other people's? One other person's, you mean.

Manders.—It was unspeakably reckless of you to seek refuge with me.

Mrs. Alving.—With our clergyman? With our intimate friend?

Manders.—Just on that account. Yes, you may thank God that I possessed the necessary firmness; that I dissuaded you from your wild designs, and that it was vouchsafed me to lead you back to the path of duty, and home to your lawful husband.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, Pastor Manders, it was certainly your work.

Manders.—I was but a poor instrument in a Higher Hand. And what a blessing has it not been to you all the days of your life, that I got you to resume the yoke of duty and obedience! Did it not all happen as I foretold? Did not Alving turn his back on his errors, as a man should? Did he not live with you from that time, lovingly and blamelessly, all his days? Did he not become a benefactor to the whole district? And did he not raise you up to him so that you, little by little, became his assistant in all his undertakings? And a capital assistant, too—Oh! I know, Mrs. Alving, that praise is due to you. But now I come to the next great false step in your life.

Mrs. Alving.—What do you mean?

Manders.—Just as you once disowned a wife's duty, so you have since disowned a mother's.

Mrs. Alving.—Ah!

Manders.—You have been all your life under the dominion of a pestilent spirit of self-will. All your efforts have been bent toward emancipation and lawlessness. You have never been willing to endure any bond. Everything that has weighed upon you in life you have cast away without care or conscience, like a burden you could throw off at will. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and you left your husband. You found it troublesome to be a mother, and you sent your child forth among strangers.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. That is true. I did so.

Manders.—And thus you have become a stranger to him.

Mrs. Alving.—No! no! I am not.

Manders.—Yes, you are; you must be. And how have you got him back again? Bethink yourself well, Mrs. Alving. You have sinned greatly against your husband;—that you recognize by raising yonder memorial to him. Recognize now, also, how you sinned against your son. There may be time to lead him back from the paths of error. Turn back, yourself, and restore what may yet be restored in him. For (with uplifted fore-finger) verily, Mrs. Alving, you are a guilt-laden mother!—This I have thought it my duty to say to you. (Silence.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Slowly and with self-control.) You have now spoken out, Pastor Manders; and to-morrow you are to speak publicly in memory of my husband. I shall not speak to-morrow. But now I will speak out a little to you, as you have spoken to me.

Manders.—To be sure. You want to bring forward excuses for your conduct—

Mrs. Alving.—No. I will only narrate.

Manders.—Well?

Mrs. Alving.—All that you have just said about me and my husband and our life together, after you had brought me back to the path of duty—as you called it—these are all matters about which you know nothing from your own observation.

From that moment you, who had been our intimate friend, never set foot in our house again.

Manders.—You and your husband left the town immediately after.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. And in my husband's life-time you never came to see us. It was business that forced you to visit me when you undertook the affairs of the Orphanage.

Manders.—(Softly and uncertainly.) Helen—if that is meant for reproach, I would beg you to bear in mind—

Mrs. Alving.— —the regard you owed to your position; yes, and that I was a runaway wife. One can never be too reserved with such unprincipled creatures.

Manders.—My dear—Mrs. Alving, you know that is an absurd exaggeration—

Mrs. Alving.—Well, well, suppose it is. All I wanted to say was, that your judgment as to my married life is founded upon nothing but current gossip.

Manders.—Well, perhaps it is. And what then?

Mrs. Alving.—Well, then, Mr. Manders—I will tell you the truth. I have sworn to myself that one day you should know it—you alone!

Manders.—And what is the truth, then?

Mrs. Alving.—The truth is that my husband died just as dissolute as he had lived all his days.

Manders.—(Feeling after a chair.) What do you say?

Mrs. Alving.—After nineteen years of marriage, as dissolute—in his desires at any rate—as he was before you married us.

Manders.—And those—those wild oats, those irregularities, those excesses, if you like, you call a “dissolute life?”

Mrs. Alving.—Our doctor used the expression.

Manders.—I don't understand you.

Mrs. Alving.—Nor need you.

Manders.—It almost makes me dizzy. All your married life, the seeming union of all these years, was nothing more than a hidden abyss!

Mrs. Alving.—Nothing more. Now you know.

Manders.—This is—it will take me long to accustom myself to the thought. I can't grasp it. I can't realize it. But how was it possible——? How could such a state of things be kept dark?

Mrs. Alving.—That has been my ceaseless struggle, day after day. After Oswald's birth, I thought Alving seemed to be a little better. But it did not last long. And then I had to struggle twice as hard, fighting for life or death, so that nobody should know what sort of a man my child's father was. And you know what power Alving had of winning people's hearts. Nobody seemed able to believe anything but good of him. He was one of those people whose life does not bite upon their reputation. But at last, Mr. Manders—for you must know the whole story—the most repulsive thing of all happened.

Manders.—More repulsive than the rest?

Mrs. Alving.—I had gone on bearing with him, although I knew very well the secret of his life out of doors. But when he brought the scandal within our own walls——

Manders.—Impossible! Here!

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; here in our own house. It was in there (pointing toward the first door on the right), in the dining-room, that I first got to know of it. I was busy with something in there, and the door was standing ajar. I heard our house-maid come up from the garden with water for yonder flowers.

Manders.—Well——

Mrs. Alving.—Soon after I heard Alving come, too. I heard him say something softly to her. And then I heard—(with a short laugh) oh! it still sounds in my ears so hateful and yet so laughably—I heard my own servant-maid whisper, "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be."

Manders.—What unseemly levity on his part! But it cannot have been more than levity, Mrs. Alving; believe me, it cannot.

Mrs. Alving.—I soon got to know what to believe. Mr. Alving had his way with the girl; and that connection had consequences, Mr. Manders.

Manders.—(As though petrified.) Such things in this house! In this house!

Mrs. Alving.—I had borne a great deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evenings—and at night—I had to make myself his boon-companion in his secret orgies up in his room. There I have had to sit alone with him, to clink glasses and drink with him, and listen to his ribald, silly talk. I have had to fight with him to get him dragged to bed——

Manders.—(Moved.) And you were able to bear all that?

Mrs. Alving.—I had my little son to bear it for. But when the last insult was added; when my own servant-maid—— Then I swore to myself; This shall come to an end. And so I took the upper hand in the house—the whole control over him and over everything else. For now I had a weapon against him, you see; he dared not oppose me. It was then that Oswald was sent from home. He was in his seventh year, and was beginning to observe and ask questions, as children do. That I could not bear. I thought the child must get poisoned by merely breathing the air in this polluted home. That was why I placed him out. And now you can see, too, why he was never allowed to set foot inside his home so long as his father lived. No one knows what it has cost me.

Manders.—You have indeed, had a life of trial.

Mrs. Alving.—I could never have borne it if I had not had my work. For I may truly say that I have worked! All these additions to the estate—all the improvements—all the useful appliances that won Alving such general praise—do you suppose he had energy for anything of the sort?—he who lay all day on the sofa and read an old court guide! No; this I will tell you too: it was I who urged him on when he had his better intervals; it was I who had to drag the whole load when he relapsed into his evil ways, or sank into querulous wretchedness.

Manders.—And it is to that man you raise a memorial?

Mrs. Alving.—There you see the power of a bad conscience.

Manders.—A bad——? What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving.—It always seemed to me impossible but that the truth must come out and be believed. So the Asylum was to deaden all rumors and banish doubt.

Manders.—In that you have certainly not missed your aim, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving.—And, besides, I had one other reason. I did not wish that Oswald, my own boy, should inherit anything whatever from his father.

Manders.—Then it is Alving's fortune that——?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. The sums which I have spent upon the Orphanage, year by year, make up the amount—I have reckoned it up precisely—the amount which made Lieutenant Alving a good match in his day.

Manders.—I don't quite understand——

Mrs. Alving.—It was my purchase-money. I do not choose that that money should pass into Oswald's hands. My son shall have everything from me—everything. (Oswald Alving enters; he has taken off his hat and overcoat in the hall. *Mrs. Alving* goes toward him.) Are you back again already? my dear, dear boy!

Oswald.—Yes. What can a fellow do out of doors in this eternal rain? But I hear dinner's ready. That's capital!

Regina.—(With a parcel, from the dining-room.) A parcel has come for you, *Mrs. Alving*. (Hands it to her.)

Mrs. Alving.—(With a glance at *Mr. Manders*.) No doubt copies of the ode for to-morrow's ceremony.

Manders.—H'm——

Regina.—And dinner is ready.

Mrs. Alving.—Very well. We will come presently. I will just—— (Begins to open the parcel.)

Regina.—(To *Oswald*.) Would *Mr. Alving* like red or white wine?

Oswald.—Both, if you please.

Regina.—Blen. Very well, sir. (She goes into the dining-room.)

Oswald.—I may as well help to uncork it. (He also goes into the dining-room, the door of which swings half open behind him.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Who has opened the parcel.) Yes, as I thought. Here is the ceremonial ode, *Pastor Manders*.

Manders.—(With folded hands.) How I'm to deliver my discourse to-morrow without embarrassment——

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! you'll get through it somehow.

Manders.—(Softly, so as not to be heard in the dining-room.) Yes; it would not do to provoke scandal.

Mrs. Alving.—(Under her breath, but firmly.) No. But then this long, hateful comedy will be ended. From the day after to-morrow it shall be for me as though he who is dead had never lived in this house. No one shall be here but my boy and his mother. (From within the dining-room comes the noise of a chair overturned, and at the same moment is heard):

Regina.—(Sharply, but whispering.) Oswald! take care! are you mad? let me go!

Mrs. Alving.—(Starts in terror.) Ah! (She stares wildly toward the half-opened door. Oswald is heard coughing and humming inside. A bottle is uncorked.)

Manders.—(Excited.) What in the world is the matter? What is it, Mrs. Alving?

Mrs. Alving.—(Hoarsely.) Ghosts! The couple from the conservatory has risen again!

Manders.—What! Is it possible! Regina? Is she—

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. Come. Not another word! (She seizes Mr. Manders by the arm, and walks unsteadily toward the dining-room.)

ACT II.

The same room. Manders and Mrs. Alving enter from the dining-room.

Mrs. Alving.—(Still in the doorway.) Veibekomme, Mr. Manders. Turns back toward the dining-room.) Aren't you coming too, Oswald?

Oswald.—(From within.) No, thank you. I think I shall go out a little.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, do. The weather seems brighter now. (She shuts the dining-room door, goes to the hall door, and calls.) Regina!

Regina.—(Outside.) Yes, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving.—Go down into the laundry, and help with the garlands.

Regina.—I'll go directly, Mrs. Alving. (Mrs. Alving assures herself that Regina goes; then shuts the door.)

Manders.—I suppose he can't overhear us in there?

Mrs. Alving.—Not when the door is shut. Besides, he is just going out.

Manders.—I am still quite upset. I can't think how I could get down a bit of dinner.

Mrs. Alving.—(Controlling her nervousness, walks up and down.) No more can I. But what is to be done now?

Manders.—Yes; what is to be done? Upon my honor, I don't know. I am so utterly inexperienced in matters of this sort.

Mrs. Alving.—I am quite convinced that, so far, no mischief has been done.

Manders.—No; Heaven forbid! But it is an unseemly state of things, nevertheless.

Mrs. Alving.—The whole thing is an idle fancy of Oswald's; you may be sure of that.

Manders.—Well, as I say, I'm not accustomed to affairs of the kind. But I should certainly think——

Mrs. Alving.—Out of the house she must go, and that immediately. It is as clear as daylight.

Manders.—Yes, of course she must.

Mrs. Alving.—But where to? It would not be right to——

Manders.—Where to? Home to her father, of course.

Mrs. Alving.—To whom did you say?

Manders.—To her—— But then, Engstrand is not——? Good God, Mrs. Alving, how is that possible? You must be mistaken, after all.

Mrs. Alving.—Alas! I'm mistaken in nothing. Johanna confessed all to me, and Alving could not deny it. So there was nothing to be done but to get the matter hushed up.

Manders.—No; you could do nothing else.

Mrs. Alving.—The girl left our service at once, and got a good sum of money to hold her tongue for the time. The rest she managed for herself when she got into the town. She re-

newed her old acquaintance with Engstrand, the carpenter, gave him to understand, I've no doubt, how much money she had got, and told him some tale about a foreigner who put in here with a yacht that summer. So she and Engstrand got married in hot haste. Why, you married them yourself.

Manders.—But then how to account for—? I recollect distinctly Engstrand coming to give notice of the marriage. He was broken down with contrition, and blamed himself so bitterly for the misbehaviour he and his sweetheart had been guilty of.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; of course he had to take the blame upon himself.

Manders.—But such a piece of duplicity on his part! And toward me, too! I certainly never could have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. Ah! I shall not fail to give him a serious talking to; he may be sure of that. And then the immorality of such a connection! For money! What was the sum the girl had given her?

Mrs. Alving.—It was three hundred dollars.

Manders.—There! think of that! for a miserable three hundred dollars to go and marry a fallen woman!

Mrs. Alving.—Then what have you to say of me? I went and married a fallen man.

Manders.—But—good heavens!—what are you talking about? A fallen man?

Mrs. Alving.—Do you think Alving was any purer when I went with him to the altar than Johanna was when Engstrand married her?

Manders.—Well, but there's a world of difference between the two cases——

Mrs. Alving.—Not so much difference, after all, except in the price—a wretched three hundred dollars and a whole fortune.

Manders.—How can you compare the two cases? You had taken counsel with your own heart and with your friends.

Mrs. Alving.—(Without looking at him.) I thought you understood where what you call my heart had strayed to at the time.

Manders.—(Distantly.) Had I understood anything of the kind, I should not have continued a daily guest in your husband's house.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, the fact remains that with myself I took no counsel whatever.

Manders.—Well, then, with your nearest relatives—as your duty bade you—with your mother and both your aunts.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; that is true. Those three cast up the account for me. Oh! it's marvellous how clearly they made out that it would be downright madness to refuse such an offer. If mother could only see me now and know what all that grandeur has come to.

Manders.—Nobody can be held responsible for the result. This, at least, remains clear: your marriage was in accordance with law and order.

Mrs. Alving.—(At the window.) Oh! that perpetual law and order! I often think it is that which does all the mischief here in the world.

Manders.—Mrs. Alving, that is a sinful way of talking.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, I can't help it; I can endure all this constraint and cowardice no longer. It is too much for me. I must work my way out to freedom.

Manders.—What do you mean by that?

Mrs. Alving.—(Drumming on the window-sill.) I ought never to have concealed the facts of Alving's life. But at that time I dared do nothing else—even for my own sake. I was such a coward.

Manders.—A coward?

Mrs. Alving.—If people had got to know anything, they would have said—"Poor man! with a runaway wife, no wonder he kicks over the traces."

Manders.—Such remarks might have been made with a certain show of right.

Mrs. Alving.—(Looking steadily at him.) If I were what I ought to be, I should go to Oswald and say, "Listen, my boy; your father was self-indulgent and vicious——"

Manders.—Merciful heavens——!

Mrs. Alving.—And then I should tell him all I have told you—every word of it.

Manders.—The idea is shocking, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; I know that. I know that very well. I am myself shocked at it. (Goes away from the window.) I am such a coward.

Manders.—You call it “cowardice” to do your plain duty? Have you forgotten that a son should love and honor his father and mother?

Mrs. Alving.—Don’t let us talk in such general terms. Let us ask: Should Oswald love and honor Chamberlain Alving?

Manders.—Is there no voice in your mother’s heart that forbids you to destroy your son’s ideals?

Mrs. Alving.—But what about the truth?

Manders.—But what about the ideals?

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! Ideals! Ideals! If I only weren’t such a coward as I am!

Manders.—Do not despise ideals, Mrs. Alving; they will avenge themselves cruelly. Take Oswald’s case; he, unfortunately, seems to have few enough ideals as it is; but I can see that his father stands before him as an ideal.

Mrs. Alving.—You are right there.

Manders.—And this conception of his father you have yourself implanted and fostered in his mind by your letters.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; in my superstitious awe for duty and decency I lied to my boy, year after year. Oh! what a coward, what a coward I have been!

Manders.—You have established a happy illusion in your son’s heart, Mrs. Alving, and assuredly you ought not to undervalue it.

Mrs. Alving.—H’m; who knows whether it is so happy, after all— But, at any rate, I won’t have any goings-on with Regina. He shall not go and ruin the poor girl.

Manders.—No; good God! that would be dreadful!

Mrs. Alving.—If I knew he was in earnest, and that it would be for his happiness—

Manders.—What? What then?

Mrs. Alving.—But it could not be; for, I'm sorry to say, Regina is not a girl to make him happy.

Manders.—Well, what then? What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving.—If I were not such a pitiful coward, I would say to him, "Marry her, or make what arrangement you please, only let us have no deception."

Manders.—But, good heavens! would you let them marry! anything so dreadful!—so unheard of——

Mrs. Alving.—Do you really mean "unheard of?" Frankly, Pastor Manders, do you suppose that throughout the country there are not plenty of married couples as closely akin as they?

Manders.—I don't in the least understand you.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, yes, indeed you do.

Manders.—Ah, you are thinking of the possibility that—— Yes! alas! family life is certainly not always so pure as it ought to be. But in such a case as you point to one can never know—at least, with any certainty. Here, on the other hand—that you, a mother, can think of letting your son——

Mrs. Alving.—But I can't—I would not for anything in the world; that is precisely what I am saying.

Manders.—No, because you are a "coward," as you put it. But if you were not a "coward," then—— Good God! a connection so shocking!

Mrs. Alving.—So far as that goes, they say we are all sprung from connections of that sort. And who is it arranged the world so, Pastor Manders?

Manders.—Questions of that sort I must decline to discuss with you, Mrs. Alving; you are far from being in the right frame of mind for them. But that you dare to call your scruples "cowardly"——

Mrs. Alving.—Let me tell you what I mean. I am timid and half-hearted because I cannot get rid of the ghosts that haunt me.

Manders.—What do you say haunts you?

Mrs. Alving.—Ghosts! When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was as though I saw ghosts before me. But I almost think we are all of us ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that

"walks" in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beliefs, and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we can't get rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sand of the sea. And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of the light.

Manders.—Ah! here we have the fruits of your reading! And pretty fruits they are, upon my word! Oh! those horrible, revolutionary, free-thinking books!

Mrs. Alving.—You are mistaken, my dear pastor. It was you yourself who set me thinking; and I thank you for it with all my heart.

Manders.—I?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. When you forced me under the yoke you called duty and obligation; when you praised as right and proper what my whole soul rebelled against as something loathsome. It was then that I began to look into the seams of your doctrine. I only wished to pick at a single knot; but when I had got that undone, the whole thing unravelled out. And then I understood that it was all machine-sewn.

Manders.—(Softly, with emotion.) And was that the upshot of my life's hardest battle?

Mrs. Alving.—Call it, rather, your most pitiful defeat.

Manders.—It was my greatest victory, Helen—the victory over myself.

Mrs. Alving.—It was a crime against us both.

Manders.—When you went astray, and came to me crying, "Here I am; take me!" I commanded you, saying: "Woman, go home to your lawful husband." Was that a crime?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, I think so.

Manders.—We two do not understand each other.

Mrs. Alving.—Not now, at any rate.

Manders.—Never—never in my most secret thoughts have I regarded you otherwise than as another's wife.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh!—indeed?

Manders.—Helen——

Mrs. Alving.—People so easily forget their past selves.

Manders.—I do not. I am what I always was.

Mrs. Alving.—(Changing the subject.) Well, well, well; don't let us talk of old times any longer. You are now over head and ears in commissions and boards of direction, and I am fighting my fight with ghosts both within me and without.

Manders.—Those without I shall help you to lay. After all the shocking things I have heard from you to-day, I cannot in conscience permit an unprotected girl to remain in your house.

Mrs. Alving.—Don't you think it would be the best plan to get her provided for?—I mean, by a good marriage.

Manders.—No doubt. I think it would be desirable for her in every respect. Regina is just now at the age when— Of course, I don't know much about these things, but—

Mrs. Alving.—Regina matured very early.

Manders.—Yes! did she not? I have an impression that she was remarkably well developed, physically, when I prepared her for confirmation. But, in the meantime, she must go home, under her father's eye—ah! but Engstrand is not— That he—that he could so hide the truth from me! (A knock at the door into the hall.)

Mrs. Alving.—Who can that be? Come in!

Engstrand.—(In his Sunday clothes, in the doorway.) I beg your pardon humbly, but—

Manders.—Ah! H'm—

Mrs. Alving.—Is that you, Engstrand?

Engstrand.—There was none of the servants about, so I took the great liberty of just knocking.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! very well. Come in. Is there anything you want to speak to me about?

Engstrand.—(Comes in.) No; I'm greatly obliged to you; it was with his Reverence I wanted to have a word or two.

Manders.—(Walking up and down the room.) H'm—in-deed! You want to speak to me, do you?

Engstrand.—Yes, I should like so much to—

Manders.—(Stops in front of him.) Well—may I ask what you want?

Engstrand.—Well, it was just this, your Reverence; we've been paid off down yonder—my grateful thanks to you, ma'am. And, now everything's finished, I've been thinking it would be but right and proper if we, that have been working so honestly together all this time—well, I was thinking we ought to end up with a little prayer-meeting to-night.

Manders.—A prayer-meeting? Down at the Orphanage?

Engstrand.—Oh, if your Reverence doesn't think it proper——

Manders.—Oh, yes! I do; but—h'm——

Engstrand.—I've been in the habit of offering up a little prayer in the evening, myself.

Mrs. Alving.—Have you?

Engstrand.—Yes, every now and then—just a little exercise, you might call it. But I am a poor, common man, and have little enough gift, God help me! and so I thought, as the Reverend Mr. Manders happened to be here, I'd——

Manders.—Well, you see, Engstrand, I must first ask you a question. Are you in the right frame of mind for such a meeting? Do you feel your conscience clear and at ease?

Engstrand.—Oh! God help us! your Reverence, we'd better not talk about conscience.

Manders.—Yes, that's just what we must talk about. What have you to answer?

Engstrand.—Why—one's conscience—it can be bad enough now and then.

Manders.—Ah, you admit that. Then will you make a clean breast of it, and tell the truth about Regina?

Mrs. Alving.—(Quickly.) Mr. Manders!

Manders.—(Reassuringly.) Just let me——

Engstrand.—About Regina! Lord! how you frighten me! (Looks at Mrs. Alving.) There's nothing wrong about Regina, is there?

Manders.—We will hope not. But, I mean, what is the truth about you and Regina? You pass for her father, eh?

Engstrand.—(Uncertain.) Well—h'm—your Reverence knows all about me and poor Johanna.

Manders.—Come, no more prevarication! Your wife told Mrs. Alving the whole story before quitting her service.

Engstrand.—Well, then, may— Now, did she, really?

Manders.—So you are found out, Engstrand.

Engstrand.—And she swore and took her Bible oath—

Manders.—Did she take her Bible oath?

Engstrand.—No; she only swore; but she did it so earnestly.

Manders.—And you have hidden the truth from me all these years? Hidden it from me! from me, who have trusted you, without reserve, in everything.

Engstrand.—Well, I can't deny it.

Manders.—Have I deserved this of you, Engstrand? Haven't I always been ready to help you in word and deed, so far as it stood in my power? Answer me. Have I not?

Engstrand.—It would have been a poor lookout for me many a time but for the Reverend Mr. Manders.

Manders.—And you reward me thus! You cause me to enter falsehoods in the church register, and you withhold from me, year after year, the explanations you owed alike to me and to truth. Your conduct has been wholly inexcusable, Engstrand; and from this time forward all is over between us.

Engstrand.—(With a sigh.) Yes! I suppose it must be.

Manders.—How can you possibly justify yourself?

Engstrand.—How could I think that she had made bad worse by talking about it? Will your Reverence just fancy yourself in the same trouble as poor Johanna—

Manders.—I!

Engstrand.—Lord bless you! I don't mean so exactly the same. But I mean, if your Reverence had anything to be ashamed of in the eyes of the world, as the saying is— We men oughtn't to judge a poor woman too hardly, your Reverence.

Manders.—I am not doing so; it is you I am reproaching.

Engstrand.—Might I make so bold as to ask your Reverence a bit of a question?

Manders.—Yes, ask away.

Engstrand.—Isn't it right and proper for a man to raise up the fallen?

Manders.—Most certainly it is.

Engstrand.—And isn't a man bound to keep his sacred word?

Manders.—Why! of course, he is; but——

Engstrand.—When Johanna had got into trouble through that Englishman—or it might have been an American or a Russian, as they call them—well, you see, she came down into the town. Poor thing! she'd sent me about my business once or twice before, for she couldn't bear the sight of anything but what was handsome; and I'd got this damaged leg. Your Reverence recollects how I ventured up into a dancing-saloon, where seafaring people carried on with drink and devilry, as the saying goes. And then, when I was for giving them a bit of an admonition to lead a new life——

Mrs. Alving.—(At the window.) H'm——

Manders.—I know all about that. Engstrand; these ruffians threw you downstairs. You have told me of the affair already.

Engstrand.—I am not puffed up about it, your Reverence. But what I wanted to tell was that then she came and confessed all to me, with weeping and gnashing of teeth. I can tell your Reverence I was sore at heart to hear it.

Manders.—Were you, indeed, Engstrand? Well, go on.

Engstrand.—So I said to her, "The American, he's sailing about on the boundless sea. And, as for you, Johanna," said I, "you've committed a grievous sin and you're a fallen creature. But Jacob Engstrand," said I, "he's got two good legs to stand upon, he has——" You know, your Reverence, I was speaking figuratively like.

Manders.—I understand quite well. Go on.

Engstrand.—Well, that was how I raised her up and made an honest woman of her, so that folks shouldn't get to know how she'd gone astray with foreigners.

Manders.—All that was very good of you. Only I can't approve of your stooping to take money——

Engstrand.—Money? I? Not a farthing!

Manders.—(Inquiringly to Mrs. Alving.) But——

Engstrand.—Oh! wait a minute; now I recollect. *Johanna* had a trifle of money. But I would have nothing to do with it. "No," said I, "that's mammon; that's the wages of sin. This dirty gold—or notes, or whatever it was—we'll just fling that back to the American," said I. But he was gone and away, over the stormy sea, your Reverence.

Manders.—Was he, really, my good fellow?

Engstrand.—Ay, sir. So *Johanna* and I we agreed that the money should go to the child's education; and so it did, and I can give account for every blessed farthing of it.

Manders.—Why! This alters the case considerably.

Engstrand.—That's just how it stands, your Reverence. And I make so bold as to say I've been an honest father to *Regina*, so far as my poor strength went; for I'm but a poor creature, worse luck!

Manders.—Well, well, my good fellow——

Engstrand.—But I may make bold to say that I have brought up the child, and lived kindly with poor *Johanna*, and ruled over my own house, as the Scripture has it. But I could never think of going up to your Reverence and puffing myself up and boasting because I, too, had done some good in the world. No, sir; when anything of that sort happens to *Jacob Engstrand* he holds his tongue about it. It doesn't happen so very often, I dare say. And when I do come to see your Reverence, I find a mortal deal to say about what's wicked and weak. For I do say—as I was saying just now—one's conscience isn't always as clean as it might be.

Manders.—Give me your hand, *Jacob Engstrand*.

Engstrand.—Oh, Lord! your Reverence——

Manders.—Come, no nonsense. (Wrings his hand.) There we are!

Engstrand.—And if I might humbly beg your Reverence's pardon——

Manders.—You? On the contrary, it is I who ought to beg your pardon.

Engstrand.—Lord, no, sir!

Manders.—Yes, certainly. And I do it with all my heart. Forgive me for misunderstanding you. And I wish I could give you some proof of my hearty regret, and of my goodwill toward you.

Engstrand.—Would your Reverence?

Manders.—With the greatest pleasure.

Engstrand.—Well, then, there's the very opportunity now. With the money I've saved here I was thinking I might found a Sailors' Home down in the town.

Mrs. Alving.—You want to?

Engstrand.—Yes; it, too, might be a sort of orphanage, in a manner of speaking. There are many temptations for seafaring folk ashore. But in this little house of mine a man might feel as under a father's eye, I was thinking.

Manders.—What do you say to this, Mrs. Alving?

Engstrand.—It isn't much I've got to start with, the Lord help me! But if I could only find a helping hand, why—

Manders.—Yes, yes; we'll look into the matter. I entirely approve of your plan. But, now, go before me and make everything ready, and get the candles lighted, so as to give the place an air of festivity. And then we will pass an edifying hour together, my good fellow; for now I quite believe you are in the right frame of mind.

Engstrand.—Yes, I trust I am. And so I'll say good-bye, ma'am, and thank you kindly; and take good care of Regina for me. (Wipes a tear from his eye.) Poor Johanna's child; h'm, that's an odd thing, now; but it's just as if she'd grown into the very core of my heart. It is, indeed. (He bows and goes out through the hall.)

Manders.—Well, what do you say about that man, now, Mrs. Alving? That threw a totally different light on matters, didn't it?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, it certainly did.

Manders.—It only shows you how excessively careful one must be in judging one's fellow-creatures. But it's a great joy to ascertain that one has been mistaken. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Alving.—I think that you are, and will remain, a great baby, Manders!

Manders.—I?

Mrs. Alving.—(Laying both hands upon his shoulder.) And I say that I have half a mind to put my arms round your neck and kiss you.

Manders.—(Stepping hastily back.) No, no; God bless us! What an idea!

Mrs. Alving.—(With a smile.) Oh! you need not be afraid of me.

Manders.—(By the table.) You have sometimes such an exaggerated way of expressing yourself. Now, I'll just collect all the documents and put them in my bag. (He does so.) There, now. And now, good-bye for the present. Keep your eyes open when Oswald comes back. I shall look in again later. (He takes his hat and goes out through the hall door.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Heaves a sigh, looks for a moment out of the window, sets the room in order a little, and is about to go into the dining-room, but stops at the door with a half-surprised cry.) Oswald, are you still at table?

Oswald.—(In the dining-room.) I am only finishing my cigar.

Mrs. Alving.—I thought you had gone for a little walk.

Oswald.—In such weather as this? (A glass clinks. Mrs. Alving leaves the door open and sits down with her knitting on the sofa by the window.) Wasn't that Pastor Manders who went away just now?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; he went down to the Orphanage.

Oswald.—H'm. (The glass and decanter clink again.)

Mrs. Alving.—(With a troubled glance.) Dear Oswald, you should take care of that liquor. It is strong.

Oswald.—It keeps out the damp.

Mrs. Alving.—Wouldn't you rather come in to me?

Oswald.—I mayn't smoke in there.

Mrs. Alving.—You know quite well that you may smoke cigars.

Oswald.—Oh! all right, then; I'll come in. Just a tiny drop more first! There! (He comes into the room with his cigar and shuts the door after him. A short silence.) Where's Manders gone to?

Mrs. Alving.—I've just told you; he went down to the Orphanage.

Oswald.—Oh, ah; so you did.

Mrs. Alving.—You shouldn't sit so long at table after dinner, Oswald.

Oswald.—(Holding his cigar behind him.) But I find it so pleasant, mother. (Strokes and pets her.) Just think what it is for me to come home and sit at mother's own table, in mother's room, and eat mother's delicious dinner.

Mrs. Alving.—My dear, dear boy!

Oswald.—(Somewhat impatiently walks about and smokes.) And what else can I do with myself here? I can't set to work at anything.

Mrs. Alving.—Why can't you?

Oswald.—In such weather as this? Without a single ray of sunlight the whole day? (Walks up the room.) Oh! not to be able to work!

Mrs. Alving.—Perhaps it was not quite wise of you to come home.

Oswald.—Oh, yes, mother; I had to.

Mrs. Alving.—Why? I would ten times rather forego the joy of having you here than——

Oswald.—(Stops beside the table.) Now, just tell me, mother; does it really make you so very happy to have me home again?

Mrs. Alving.—Does it make me happy?

Oswald.—(Crumpling up a newspaper.) I should have thought it must be pretty much the same to you whether I was in existence or not.

Mrs. Alving.—Have you the heart to say that to your mother, Oswald?

Oswald.—But you've got on very well without me all this time.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; I've got on without you. That is true. (A silence. Twilight gradually falls. Oswald walks to and fro across the room. He has laid his cigar down.)

Oswald.—(Stops beside Mrs. Alving.) Mother, may I sit down on the sofa by you?

Mrs. Alving.—(Makes room for him.) Yes; do, my dear boy.

Oswald.—(Sits down.) Now I am going to tell you something, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—(Anxiously.) Well?

Oswald.—(Looks fixedly before him.) For I can't go on hiding it any longer.

Mrs. Alving.—Hiding what? What is it?

Oswald.—(As before.) I could never bring myself to write to you about it; and since I've come home—

Mrs. Alving.—(Seizes him by the arm.) Oswald, what is the matter?

Oswald.—(As before.) Both yesterday and to-day I have tried to put the thoughts away from me—to get free from them; but it won't do.

Mrs. Alving.—(Rising.) Now, you must speak out, Oswald.

Oswald.—(Draws her down to the sofa again.) Sit still, and then I will try and tell you. I complained of fatigue after my journey—

Mrs. Alving.—Well, what then?

Oswald.—But it isn't that that's the matter with me; it isn't any ordinary fatigue—

Mrs. Alving.—(Tries to jump up.) You're not ill, Oswald?

Oswald.—(Draws her down again.) Do sit still, mother. Only take it quietly. I am not downright ill, either; not what is commonly called "ill." (Clasps his hands above his head.) Mother, my mind is broken down—ruined—I shall never be able to work again. (With his hands before his face, he buries his head in her lap and breaks into bitter sobbing.)

Mrs. Alving.—(White and trembling.) Oswald! look at me! No, no; it isn't true.

Oswald.—(Looks up with despair in his eyes.) Never be able to work again. Never, never! It will be like living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible?

Mrs. Alving.—My poor boy! How has this horrible thing come over you?

Oswald.—(Sits upright.) That's just what I can't possibly grasp or understand. I have never led an unsteady life—never, in any respect. You must not believe that of me, mother. I have never done that.

Mrs. Alving.—I'm sure you haven't, Oswald.

Oswald.—And yet this has come over me just the same—this awful misfortune!

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! but it will pass away, my dear, blessed boy. It is nothing but overwork. Trust me, I am right.

Oswald.—(Sadly.) I thought so, too, at first; but it isn't so.

Mrs. Alving.—Tell me the whole story, from beginning to end.

Oswald.—Well, I will.

Mrs. Alving.—When did you first notice it?

Oswald.—It was directly after I had been home last time and had got back to Paris again. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head—chiefly in the back of my head, I thought. It was as though a tight iron ring was being screwed round my neck and upward.

Mrs. Alving.—Well, and then?

Oswald.—At first I thought it was nothing but the ordinary headache I had been so plagued with when I was growing up—

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, yes—

Oswald.—But it was not that. I soon found that out. I couldn't work. I wanted to begin upon a big new picture, but it was as though my powers failed me; all my strength was crippled; I could not form any definite images; it all swam before me—whirling round and round. Oh! it was an awful state! At last I sent for a doctor, and from him I got to know the truth.

Mrs. Alving.—How do you mean?

Oswald.—He was one of the first doctors in Paris. I told him my symptoms, and then he set to work asking me a heap of questions which I thought had nothing to do with the matter. I couldn't imagine what the man was after——

Mrs. Alving.—Well?

Oswald.—At last he said: "You have been worm-eaten from your birth." He used that very word—*vermoulu*.

Mrs. Alving.—(Breathlessly.) What did he mean by that?

Oswald.—I didn't understand, either, and begged of him to give me a clearer explanation. And then the old cynic said—— (Clenching his fist.) Oh!——

Mrs. Alving.—What did he say?

Oswald.—He said: "The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children."

Mrs. Alving.—(Rising slowly.) The sins of the fathers——

Oswald.—I very nearly struck him in the face——

Mrs. Alving.—(Walks away across the floor.) The sins of the fathers——

Oswald.—(Smiles sadly.) Yes; what do you think of that? Of course, I assured him that such a thing was out of the question. But, do you think he gave in? No, he stuck to it; and it was only when I produced your letters and translated to him the passages relating to father——

Mrs. Alving.—But, then?

Oswald.—Then he was, of course, bound to admit that he was on the wrong track, and so I got to know the truth—the incomprehensible truth! I ought to have held aloof from my bright and happy student life among my fellows. It has been too much for my strength. So I had brought it upon myself.

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald! Oh, no! don't believe it.

Oswald.—No other explanation was possible, he said. That is the awful part of it. Incurably ruined for my whole life—by my own heedlessness! All that I meant to have done in the world—— I never dare think of again. I am not able to think of it. Oh! if I could but live over again, and undo all I have done! (He buries his face in the sofa. *Mrs. Alving* wrings her hands and walks, in silent struggle, backward and

forward. Oswald, after a while, looks up and remains resting upon his elbow.) If it had only been something inherited, something one wasn't responsible for! But this! To have thrown away so shamefully, thoughtlessly, recklessly, one's own happiness, one's own health, everything in the world—one's future, one's very life!

Mrs. Alving.—No, no, my dear, darling boy! It is impossible. (Bends over him.) Things are not so desperate as you think.

Oswald.—Oh! you don't know—— (Springs up.) And then, mother, to cause you all this sorrow! Many a time have I almost wished and hoped that at bottom you did not care so very much about me.

Mrs. Alving.—I, Oswald? my only boy! You are all I have in the world! The only thing I care about!

Oswald.—(Seizes both her hands and kisses them.) Yes, mother dear, I see it well enough. When I am at home, I see it, of course; and that is the hardest part for me. But now you know all about it, and now we won't talk any more about it to-day. I daren't think about it for long together. (Goes up the room.) Get me something to drink, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—Drink? What do you want to drink now?

Oswald.—Oh! anything you like. You've got some cold punch in the house.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, but, my dear Oswald——

Oswald.—Don't refuse me, mother. Do be nice, now! I must have something to wash down all these gnawing thoughts. (Goes into the conservatory.) And then—it is so dark here! (Mrs. Alving pulls a bell-rope on her right.) And this ceaseless rain! It may go on week after week for months together. Never to get a glimpse of the sun! I can't recollect ever to have seen the sun shine all the times I've been at home.

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald, you are thinking of going away from me.

Oswald.—(Drawing a deep breath.) I am not thinking of anything. I can't think of anything. (In a low voice.) I left thinking alone.

Regina.—(From the dining-room.) Did you ring, ma'am?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes; let us have the lamp in.

Regina.—I will, directly. It is ready lighted. (Goes out.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Goes across to Oswald.) Oswald, be frank with me.

Oswald.—Well, so I am, mother. (Goes to the table.) I think I have told you enough. (Regina brings the lamp and sets it upon the table.)

Mrs. Alving.—Regina, you might fetch us half a bottle of champagne.

Regina.—Very well, ma'am. (Goes out.)

Oswald.—(Puts his arm round Mrs. Alving's neck.) That's just what I wanted. I knew mother wouldn't let her boy be thirsty.

Mrs. Alving.—My own poor, darling Oswald, how could I deny you anything now?

Oswald.—(Eagerly.) Is that true, mother? Do you mean it?

Mrs. Alving.—How? What?

Oswald.—That you couldn't deny me anything.

Mrs. Alving.—My dear Oswald—

Oswald.—Hush!

Regina.—(Brings a tray with a half-bottle of champagne and two glasses, which she sets on the table.) Shall I open it?

Oswald.—No, thanks. I'll do it myself. (Regina walks out again.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Sits down by the table.) What was it you meant I mustn't deny you?

Oswald.—(Busy opening the bottle.) First, let's have a glass—or two. (The cork pops; he pours wine into one glass and is about to pour it into the other.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Holding her hand over it.) Thanks; not for me.

Oswald.—Oh! won't you? Then I will! (He empties the glass, fills and empties it again; then he sits down by the table.)

Mrs. Alving.—(In expectation.) Well?

Oswald.—(Without looking at her.) Tell me—I thought you and Pastor Manders looked so odd—well, so awfully quiet at the dinner table to-day.

Mrs. Alving.—Did you notice it?

Oswald.—Yes. H'm—— (After a short silence.) Tell me, what do you think of Regina?

Mrs. Alving.—What I think?

Oswald.—Yes; isn't she splendid?

Mrs. Alving.—My dear Oswald, you don't know her so well as I do.

Oswald.—Well?

Mrs. Alving.—Regina, unfortunately, was allowed to stay at home too long. I ought to have taken her earlier into my house.

Oswald.—Yes, but isn't she splendid to look at, mother? (He fills his glass.)

Mrs. Alving.—Regina has many serious faults.

Oswald.—Oh, I dare say. What does it matter? (He drinks again.)

Mrs. Alving.—But I'm fond of her, nevertheless, and I am responsible for her. I wouldn't have any harm happen to her for all the world.

Oswald.—(Springs up.) Mother! Regina is my only salvation.

Mrs. Alving.—(Rising.) What do you mean by that?

Oswald.—I can't go on bearing all this misery of mind alone.

Mrs. Alving.—Have you not got your mother to share it with you?

Oswald.—Yes; that's what I thought; and so I came home to you. But that won't do. I see it won't do. I can't endure my life here.

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald!

Oswald.—I must live in a different way, mother. That's why I must go away from you. I won't have you looking on at it.

Mrs. Alving.—My unhappy boy! But, Oswald, while you are so ill as at present——

Oswald.—If it were only the illness, I should stay with you, mother, you may be sure; for you are the best friend I have in the world.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, indeed I am, Oswald; am I not?

Oswald.—(Wanders restlessly about.) But it is all the torment, the remorse; and, beside that, the great, crushing dread. Oh! that awful dread!

Mrs. Alving.—(Walking after him.) Dread; what dread? What do you mean?

Oswald.—Oh! you mustn't ask me any more. I don't know. I can't describe it to you. (Mrs. Alving goes over to the right and pulls the bell.) What is it you want?

Mrs. Alving.—I want my boy to be happy—that is what I want. He shall not go on racking his brains. (To Regina, who comes in the door.) More champagne—a whole bottle. (Regina goes.)

Oswald.—Mother!

Mrs. Alving.—Do you think we don't know how to live out here in the country?

Oswald.—Isn't she splendid to look at? How beautifully she's built! And so healthy to the core!

Mrs. Alving.—(Sits down by the table.) Sit down, Oswald; let us talk quietly together.

Oswald.—(Sits down.) I dare say you don't know, mother, that I owe Regina some reparation.

Mrs. Alving.—You?

Oswald.—For a bit of thoughtlessness, or whatever you like to call it—very innocent, anyhow. When I was home last time——

Mrs. Alving.—Well?

Oswald.—She used so often to ask me about Paris, and I used to tell her one thing and another. Then I recollect I happened to say to her one day, "Wouldn't you like to come down there yourself?"

Mrs. Alving.—Well?

Oswald.—I saw that she blushed deeply, and then she said, "Yes, I should like it of all things." "Ah! well," I replied, "it might perhaps be managed"—or something like that.

Mrs. Alving.—And then?

Oswald.—Of course, I had forgotten the whole thing; but the day before yesterday I happened to ask her whether she was glad I was to stay at home so long——

Mrs. Alving.—Yes?

Oswald.—And then she looked so strangely at me and asked, "But what is to become of my trip to Paris?"

Mrs. Alving.—Her trip!

Oswald.—And so I got out of her that she had taken the thing seriously; that she had been thinking of me the whole time; and had set to work to learn French——

Mrs. Alving.—So that was why she did it!

Oswald.—Mother! when I saw that fresh, lovely, splendid girl standing there before me—till then I had hardly noticed her—but when she stood there as though with open arms ready to receive me——

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald!

Oswald.—Then it flashed upon me that my salvation was in her; for I saw that she was full of the joy of life.

Mrs. Alving.—(Starts.) The joy of life? Can there be salvation in that?

Regina.—(From the dining-room, with a bottle of champagne.) I'm sorry to have been so long, but I had to go to the cellar. (Puts the bottle on the table.)

Oswald.—And now fetch another glass.

Regina.—(Looks at him in surprise.) There is Mrs. Alving's glass, Mr. Alving.

Oswald.—Yes, but fetch one for yourself, Regina. (Regina starts and gives a lightning-like side-glance at Mrs. Alving.) Why do you wait?

Regina.—(Softly and hesitatingly.) Is it Mrs. Alving's wish?

Mrs. Alving.—Fetch the glass, Regina. (Regina goes out into the dining-room.)

Oswald.—(Follows her with his eyes.) Have you noticed how she walks?—so firmly and lightly!

Mrs. Alving.—It can never be, Oswald.

Oswald.—It's a settled thing. Can't you see that? It is no use to say anything against it. (Regina enters with an empty glass, which she keeps in her hand.) Sit down, Regina. (Regina looks inquiringly at Mrs. Alving.)

Mrs. Alving.—Sit down. (Regina sits down on a chair by the dining-room door, still holding the empty glass in her hand.) Oswald, what were you saying about the joy of life?

Oswald.—Ah, the joy of life, mother; that's a thing you don't know much about in these parts. I have never felt it here.

Mrs. Alving.—Not when you are with me?

Oswald.—Not when I'm at home. But you don't understand that.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, yes; I think I almost understand it—now.

Oswald.—And then, too, the joy of work. At bottom, it's the same thing. But that, too, you know nothing about.

Mrs. Alving.—Perhaps you are right, Oswald; let me hear more about it.

Oswald.—Well, I only mean that here people are brought up to believe that work is a curse and a punishment for sin, and that life is something miserable, something we want to be done with, the sooner the better.

Mrs. Alving.—"A vale of tears," yes; and we take care to make it one.

Oswald.—But in the great world people won't hear of such things. There nobody really believes such doctrines any longer. There you feel it bliss and ecstasy merely to draw the breath of life. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life? always, always upon the joy of life?—light and sunshine and glorious air, and faces radiant with happiness? That is why I am afraid of remaining at home with you.

Mrs. Alving.—Afraid? What are you afraid of here, with me?

Oswald.—I am afraid that all that is germinating in me would develop into ugliness.

Mrs. Alving.—(Looks steadily at him.) Do you think that would be the way of it?

Oswald.—I know it. You may live the same life here as there, and yet it won't be the same life.

Mrs. Alving.—(Who has been listening eagerly, rises, her eyes big with thoughts, and says:) Now I see the connection.

Oswald.—What is it you see?

Mrs. Alving.—I see it now for the first time. And now I can speak.

Oswald.—(Rising.) Mother, I don't understand you.

Regina.—(Who has also risen.) Perhaps I ought to go?

Mrs. Alving.—No. Stay here. Now I can speak. Now, my boy, you shall know the whole truth. And then you can choose. Oswald! Regina!

Oswald.—Hush! Here's Manders.

Manders.—(Comes in by the hall door.) There! We've had a most edifying time down there.

Oswald.—So have we.

Manders.—We must stand by Engstrand and his Sailors' Home. Regina must go to him and help him—

Regina.—No, thank you, sir.

Manders.—(Noticing her for the first time.) What? You here? and with a glass in your hand!

Regina.—(Hastily putting the glass down.) Pardon!

Oswald.—Regina is going with me, Mr. Manders.

Manders.—Going with you!

Oswald.—Yes; as my wife—if she wishes it.

Manders.—But, good God—

Regina.—It's none of my doing, sir.

Oswald.—Or she will stay here, if I stay.

Regina.—(Involuntarily.) Here!

Manders.—I am thunderstruck at your conduct, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving.—They will do neither one thing nor the other; for now I can speak out plainly.

Manders.—You surely won't do that. No, no, no.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes. I can speak and I will. And no ideal shall suffer, after all.

Oswald.—Mother! What on earth are you hiding from me?

Regina.—(Listening.) O ma'am! listen! Don't you hear shouts outside. (She goes into the conservatory and looks out.)

Oswald.—(At the window on the left.) What's going on? Where does that light come from?

Regina.—(Cries out.) The Orphanage is on fire!

Mrs. Alving.—(Rushing to the window.) On fire?

Manders.—On fire! Impossible! I have just come from there.

Oswald.—Where is my hat? Oh, never mind it—— Father's Orphanage! (He rushes out through the garden door.)

Mrs. Alving.—My shawl, Regina! It is blazing.

Manders.—Terrible! Mrs. Alving, it is a judgment upon this abode of sin.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, of course. Come, Regina. (She and Regina hasten out through the hall.)

Manders.—(Folds his hands together.) And uninsured, too! (He goes out the same way.)

ACT III.

The same room; all the doors open, a lamp burning on the table. It is dark without, but a faint glow from the conflagration can be seen in background at left. Mrs. Alving, with a shawl over her head, stands in the conservatory, looking out. Regina, with a shawl on, stands behind her.

Mrs. Alving.—All burnt!—burnt to the ground!

Regina.—The basement is still burning.

Mrs. Alving.—How is it Oswald doesn't come home? There's nothing to be saved.

Regina.—Would you like me to take down his hat to him?

Mrs. Alving.—Hasn't he even got his hat on?

Regina.—(Pointing to the hall.) No; there it hangs.

Mrs. Alving.—Let it be. He must come up now. I will go and look for him myself. (She goes out through the garden door.)

Manders.—(Comes in from the hall.) Isn't Mrs. Alving here?

Regina.—She's just gone down the garden.

Manders.—This is the most terrible night I ever lived through.

Regina.—Yes; isn't it a dreadful misfortune, sir?

Manders.—Oh! don't talk about it! I can hardly bear to think of it.

Regina.—How can it have happened?

Manders.—Don't ask me, Regina! How should I know? Do you, also— Isn't it enough that your father—

Regina.—What about him?

Manders.—Oh, he has driven me clean out of my mind—

Engstrand.—(Comes through the hall.) Your Reverence!

Manders.—(Turns round in terror.) Are you after me here, too?

Engstrand.—Yes; Lord, strike me dead, but I must— It's an awfully ugly business, your Reverence.

Manders.—(Walks to and fro.) Alas! alas!

Regina.—What is the matter?

Engstrand.—Why, it all came of that prayer-meeting, you see. (Softly.) The bird's limed, my girl. (Aloud.) And to think that it's my fault that it's his Reverence's fault!

Manders.—But I assure you, Engstrand—

Engstrand.—But there wasn't another soul except your Reverence that ever touched the candles down there.

Manders.—(Stops.) Ah! so you declare. But I certainly can't recollect that I ever had a candle in my hand.

Engstrand.—And I saw as clear as daylight how your Reverence took the light and snuffed it with your fingers, and threw away the snuff among the shavings.

Manders.—And you stood and looked on?

Engstrand.—Yes. I saw it as plain as a pike-staff.

Manders.—It's quite beyond my comprehension. Besides, it's never been my habit to snuff candles with my fingers.

Engstrand.—And very risky it looked, that it did! But is there so much harm done, after all, your Reverence?

Manders.—(Walks restlessly to and fro.) Oh! don't ask me.

Engstrand.—(Walks with him.) And your Reverence hadn't insured it, neither?

Manders.—(Continuing to walk up and down.) No, no, no; you've heard that already.

Engstrand.—(Following him.) Not insured! And then to go right down and set light to the whole thing. Lord! Lord! what a misfortune!

Manders.—(Wipes the sweat from his forehead.) Ay, you may well say that, Engstrand.

Engstrand.—And to think that such a thing should happen to a benevolent institution that was to have been a blessing both to town and country, as the saying is! The newspapers won't handle your Reverence very gently, I expect.

Manders.—No; that's just what I'm thinking of. That's almost the worst of it. All the hateful attacks and accusations! Oh! it's terrible only to imagine it.

Mrs. Alving.—(Comes in from the garden.) He can't be got away from the fire.

Manders.—Ah! there you are, Mrs. Alving!

Mrs. Alving.—So you've got off your inaugural address, Pastor Manders.

Manders.—Oh! I should so gladly——

Mrs. Alving.—(In an undertone.) It is all for the best. That Orphanage would have done no good to anybody.

Manders.—Do you think not?

Mrs. Alving.—Do you think it would?

Manders.—It's an immense misfortune, all the same.

Mrs. Alving.—Let us speak plainly of it, as a piece of business. Are you waiting for Mr. Manders, Engstrand?

Engstrand.—(At the hall door.) Ay, ma'am; indeed I am.

Mrs. Alving.—Then sit down, meanwhile.

Engstrand.—Thank you, ma'am; I'd rather stand.

Mrs. Alving.—(To Manders.) I suppose you're going away by the steamer?

Manders.—Yes, it starts in an hour.

Mrs. Alving.—Be so good as to take all the papers with you. I won't hear another word about that affair. I have got other things to think about.

Manders.—Mrs. Alving—

Mrs. Alving.—Later on I shall send you a power of attorney to settle everything as you please.

Manders.—That I shall very readily take upon myself. The original destination of the gift must now be completely changed, alas!

Mrs. Alving.—Of course, it must.

Manders.—Well, I think, first of all, I shall arrange that the Solvik property shall pass to the parish. The land is by no means without value. It can always be turned to account for some purpose or other. And the interest of the money in the bank I could, perhaps, best apply for the benefit of some undertaking that has proved itself a blessing to the town.

Mrs. Alving.—Do exactly as you please. The whole matter is now completely indifferent to me.

Engstrand.—Give a thought to my Sailors' Home, your Reverence.

Manders.—Yes, that's not a bad suggestion. That must be considered.

Engstrand.—Oh, devil take considering—I beg your pardon!

Manders.—(With a sigh.) And I'm sorry to say I don't know how long I shall be able to retain control of these things—whether public opinion may not compel me to retire. It entirely depends upon the result of the official inquiry into the fire—

Mrs. Alving.—What are you talking about?

Manders.—And the result can by no means be foretold.

Engstrand.—(Comes close to him.) Ah, but it can, though. For here stands Jacob Engstrand.

Manders.—Well, well, but—

Engstrand.—(More softly.) And Jacob Engstrand isn't the man to desert a noble benefactor in the hour of need, as the saying is.

Manders.—Yes, but my good fellow—how——

Engstrand.—Jacob Engstrand may be likened to a guardian angel, he may, your Reverence.

Manders.—No, no; I can't accept that.

Engstrand.—Oh! you will, though, all the same. I know a man that's taken others' sins upon himself before now, I do.

Manders.—Jacob! (Wrings his hand.) You are a rare character. Well, you shall be helped with your Sailors' Home. That you may rely upon. (Engstrand tries to thank him, but cannot, for emotion. Mr. Manders hangs his travelling bag over his shoulder.) And now let's be off. We two go together.

Engstrand.—(At the dining-room door, softly to Regina.) You come along, too, girl. You shall live as snug as the yolk in an egg.

Regina.—(Tosses her head.) Merci! (She goes out into the hall and fetches Manders' overcoat.)

Manders.—Good-bye, Mrs. Alving! and may the spirit of law and order descend upon this house, and that quickly.

Mrs. Alving.—Good-bye, Manders. (She goes up toward the conservatory, as she sees Oswald coming in through the garden door.)

Engstrand.—(While he and Regina help Manders to get his coat on.) Good-bye, my child. And if any trouble should come to you, you know where Jacob Engstrand is to be found. (Softly.) Little Harbor street. H'm! (To Mrs. Alving and Oswald.) And the refuge for wandering mariners shall be called "Captain Alving's Home," that it shall! And, if I'm spared to carry on that house in my own way, I venture to promise that it shall be worthy of his memory.

Manders.—(In the doorway.) H'm—h'm—now come, my dear Engstrand. Good-bye! Good-bye! (He and Engstrand go out through the hall.)

Oswald.—(Walks toward the table.) What house was he talking about?

Mrs. Alving.—Oh, I suppose it was a kind of home that he and Manders want to set up.

Oswald.—It will burn down, like the other.

Mrs. Alving.—What makes you think so?

Oswald.—Everything will burn. There won't remain a single thing in memory of father. Here am I, too, burning down. (Regina starts and looks at him.)

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald! you ought not to have remained so long down there, my poor boy!

Oswald.—(Sits down by the table.) I almost think you are right.

Mrs. Alving.—Let me dry your face, Oswald; you are quite wet. (She dries his face with her pocket handkerchief.)

Oswald.—(Stares indifferently in front of him.) Thanks, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—Are you not tired, Oswald? Would you like to go to sleep?

Oswald.—(Nervously.) No, no—I can't sleep. I never sleep. I only pretend to. (Sadly.) That will come soon enough.

Mrs. Alving.—(Looking sorrowfully at him.) Yes! you really are ill, my blessed boy.

Regina.—(Eagerly.) Is Mr. Alving ill?

Oswald.—(Impatiently.) Oh! do shut all the doors! This awful dread——

Mrs. Alving.—Shut the doors, Regina. (Regina shuts them and remains standing by the hall door. Mrs. Alving takes her shawl off. Regina does the same. Mrs. Alving draws a chair across to Oswald's and sits by him.)

Mrs. Alving.—There, now! I am going to sit beside you——

Oswald.—Ah! do. And Regina shall stay here, too. Regina shall always be with me. You'll come to the rescue, Regina, won't you?

Regina.—I don't understand——

Mrs. Alving.—To the rescue?

Oswald.—Yes, in the hour of need.

Mrs. Alving.—Oswald, have you not your mother to come to the rescue?

Oswald.—You? (Smiles.) No, mother; that rescue you will never bring me. (Laughs sadly.) You! ha! ha! (Looks earnestly at her.) Though, after all, it lies nearest to you. (Impetuously.) Why don't you say "thou" to me, Regina? Why don't you call me "Oswald?"

Regina.—(Softly.) I don't think Mrs. Alving would like it.

Mrs. Alving.—You shall soon have leave to do it. And sit over here beside us, won't you. (Regina sits down quietly and hesitatingly on the other side of the table.)

Mrs. Alving.—And now, my poor suffering boy, I am going to take the burden off your mind—

Oswald.—You, mother?

Mrs. Alving.—All the gnawing remorse and self-reproach.

Oswald.—And you think you can do that?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, now I can, Oswald. You spoke of the joy of life; and at that word a new light burst for me over my life and all it has contained.

Oswald.—(Shakes his head.) I don't understand what you are saying.

Mrs. Alving.—You ought to have known your father when he was a young lieutenant. He was brimming over with the joy of life!

Oswald.—Yes, I know he was.

Mrs. Alving.—It was like a breezy day only to look at him. And what exuberant strength and vitality there was in him!

Oswald.—Well?

Mrs. Alving.—And then, child of joy as he was—for he was like a child at that time—he had to live here at home in a half-grown town, which had no joys to offer him, but only dissipations. He had no object in life, but only an official position. He had no work into which he could throw himself heart and soul; he had only business. He had not a single comrade that knew what the joy of life meant—only loafers and boon companions—

Oswald.—Mother!

Mrs. Alving.—So that happened which was sure to happen.

Oswald.—And what was sure to happen?

Mrs. Alving.—You said yourself, this evening, how it would go with you if you stayed at home.

Oswald.—Do you mean to say that father—

Mrs. Alving.—Your poor father found no outlet for the overpowering joy of life that was in him. And I brought no brightness into his home.

Oswald.—Not even you?

Mrs. Alving.—They had taught me a lot about duties, and so on, which I had taken to be true. Everything was marked out into duties—into my duties and his duties, and—I am afraid I made home intolerable for your poor father, Oswald.

Oswald.—Why did you never write me anything about all this?

Mrs. Alving.—I have never before seen it in such a light that I could speak of it to you, his son.

Oswald.—In what light did you see it, then?

Mrs. Alving.—(Slowly.) I saw only this one thing, that your father was a broken-down man before you were born.

Oswald.—(Softly.) Ah! (He rises and walks away to the window.)

Mrs. Alving.—And then, day after day, I dwelt on the thought that by rights Regina belonged here in the house—just like my own boy.

Oswald.—(Turning round quickly.) Regina!

Regina.—(Springs up and asks, with bated breath:, I?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, now you know it, both of you.

Oswald.—Regina!

Regina.—(To herself.) So mother was that kind of woman, after all.

Mrs. Alving.—Your mother had many good qualities, Regina.

Regina.—Yes, but she was one of that sort, all the same. Oh! I've often suspected it; but— And now, if you please, ma'am, may I be allowed to go away at once?

Mrs. Alving.—Do you really wish it, Regina?

Regina.—Yes, indeed I do.

Mrs. Alving.—Of course, you can do as you like; but——

Oswald.—(Goes toward Regina.) Go away now? Now that you belong here?

Regina.—*Merci*, Mr. Alving!—or now, I suppose, I may say Oswald. But I can tell you this wasn't what I expected.

Mrs. Alving.—Regina, I have not been frank with you——

Regina.—No, that you haven't, indeed. If I'd known that Oswald was ill, why—— And now, too, that it can never come to anything serious between us—— Oh! I really can't stop out here in the country and wear myself out nursing sick people.

Oswald.—Not even one who is so near to you?

Regina.—No, that I can't. A poor girl must make the best of her young days, or she'll be left out in the cold before she knows where she is. And I, too, have the joy of life in me, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving.—I'm afraid you have. But don't throw yourself away, Regina.

Regina.—Oh! what must be must be. If Oswald takes after his father, I take after my mother, I dare say. May I ask, ma'am, if Mr. Manders knows all this about me?

Mrs. Alving.—Mr. Manders knows all about it.

Regina.—(Puts on her shawl hastily.) Well, then, I'd better make haste and get away by this steamer. Pastor Manders is so nice to deal with; and I certainly think I've as much right to a little of that money as he has—that brute of a carpenter.

Mrs. Alving.—You are heartily welcome to it, Regina.

Regina.—(Looks hard at her.) I think you might have brought me up as a gentleman's daughter, ma'am; it would have suited me better. (Tosses her head.) But it's done now—it doesn't matter! (With a bitter side-glance at the corked bottle.) All the same, I may come to drink champagne with gentlefolks yet.

Mrs. Alving.—And, if you ever need a home, Regina, come to me.

Regina.—No, thank you, ma'am. Mr. Manders will look after me, I know. And if the worst comes to the worst, I know of one place where I belong by rights.

Mrs. Alving.—Where is that?

Regina.—"Captain Alving's Home."

Mrs. Alving.—Regina—now I see it—you're going to your ruin.

Regina.—Oh, stuff! Good-bye. (She nods and goes out through the hall.)

Oswald.—(Stands at the window and looks out.) Is she gone?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes.

Oswald.—(Murmuring aside to himself.) I think it was wrong, all this.

Mrs. Alving.—(Goes behind him and lays her hands on his shoulders.) Oswald, my dear boy, has it shaken you very much?

Oswald.—(Turns his face toward her.) All that about father, do you mean?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, about your unhappy father. I'm so afraid it may have been too much for you.

Oswald.—Why should you fancy that? Of course, it came upon me as a great surprise, but, after all, it can't matter much to me.

Mrs. Alving.—(Draws her hands away.) Can't matter! That your father was so infinitely miserable!

Oswald.—Of course, I can pity him as I would anybody else; but—

Mrs. Alving.—Nothing more? Your own father!

Oswald.—(Impatiently.) Oh, there! "Father," "father!" I never knew anything of father. I don't remember anything about him, except—that he once made me sick.

Mrs. Alving.—That's a terrible way to speak! Should not a son love his father, all the same?

Oswald.—When a son has nothing to thank his father for? has never known him? Do you really cling to the old superstition?—you who are so enlightened in other ways?

Mrs. Alving.—Is that only a superstition?

Oswald.—Yes; can't you see it, mother? It is one of those notions that are current in the world, and so——

Mrs. Alving.—(Deeply moved.) Ghosts!

Oswald.—(Crossing the room.) Yes; you may well call them ghosts.

Mrs. Alving.—(Wildly.) Oswald! then you don't love me, either!

Oswald.—You I know, at any rate.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, you know me; but is that all?

Oswald.—And, of course, I know how fond you are of me, and I can't but be grateful to you. And you can be so very useful to me, now that I am ill.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, can't I, Oswald? Oh! I could almost bless your illness which drove you home to me. For I can see very plainly you are not mine; I have to win you.

Oswald.—(Impatiently.) Yes, yes, yes; all these are just so many phrases. You must recollect I am a sick man, mother. I can't be much taken up with other people; I have enough to do thinking about myself.

Mrs. Alving.—(In a low voice.) I shall be easily satisfied and patient.

Oswald.—And cheerful, too, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, my dear boy, you are quite right. (Goes toward him.) Have I relieved you of all remorse and self-reproach now?

Oswald.—Yes; you have done that. But who is to relieve me of the dread?

Mrs. Alving.—The dread?

Oswald.—(Walks across the room.) Regina could have been got to do it.

Mrs. Alving.—I don't understand you. What is all this about dread—and Regina?

Oswald.—Is it very late, mother?

Mrs. Alving.—It is early morning. (She looks out through the conservatory.) The day is dawning over the hills; and the

weather is fine, Oswald. In a little while you shall see the sun.

Oswald.—I'm glad of that. Oh! there may be much for me to rejoice in and live for——

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, much—much, indeed!

Oswald.—Even if I can't work——

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! you will soon be able to work again, my dear boy, now that you have no longer got all those gnawing and depressing thoughts to brood over.

Oswald.—Yes, I am glad you were able to free me from all those fancies; and when I've got one thing more arranged——
(Sits on the sofa.) Now we will have a little talk, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, let us. (She pushes an arm-chair toward the sofa and sits down close to him.)

Oswald.—And, meantime, the sun will be rising. And then you will know all. And then I sha'n't have that dread any longer.

Mrs. Alving.—What am I to know?

Oswald.—(Not listening to her.) Mother, didn't you say, a little while ago, that there was nothing in the world you would not do for me, if I asked you?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, to be sure I said it.

Oswald.—And you'll stick to it, mother?

Mrs. Alving.—You may rely on that, my dear and only boy! I have nothing in the world to live for but you alone.

Oswald.—All right, then; now you shall hear. Mother, you have a strong, steadfast mind, I know. Now you are to sit quite still when you hear it.

Mrs. Alving.—What dreadful thing can it be——

Oswald.—You are not to scream out. Do you hear? Do you promise me that? We'll sit and talk about it quite quietly. Do you promise me this, mother?

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, yes; I promise you that. Only speak!

Oswald.—Well, you must know that all this fatigue, and my not being able to think of working at all—all that is not the illness itself——

Mrs. Alving.—Then what is the illness itself?

Oswald.—The disease I have as my birthright (he points to his forehead and adds very softly) is seated here.

Mrs. Alving.—(Almost voiceless.) Oswald! No, no!

Oswald.—Don't scream. I can't bear it. Yes, it is sitting here—waiting. And it may break out any day—at any moment.

Mrs. Alving.—Oh! what horror!

Oswald.—Now, do be quiet. That's how it stands with me——

Mrs. Alving.—(Jumps up.) It is not true, Oswald. It is impossible. It can't be so.

Oswald.—I have had one attack down there already. It was soon over. But when I got to know what had been the matter with me, then the dread came upon me raging and tearing; and so I set off home to you as fast as I could.

Mrs. Alving.—Then this is the dread——

Oswald.—Yes, for it's so indescribably awful, you know. Oh! if it had been merely an ordinary mortal disease! For I'm not so afraid of death—though I should like to live as long as I can.

Mrs. Alving.—Yes, yes, Oswald, you must.

Oswald.—But this is so unspeakably loathsome! To become a little baby again! To have to be fed! To have to—— Oh! I can't speak of it.

Mrs. Alving.—The child has his mother to nurse him.

Oswald.—(Jumps up.) No, never; that's just what I won't have. I can't endure to think that perhaps I should lie in that state for many years—get old and gray. And in the meantime you might die and leave me. (Sits in Mrs. Alving's chair.) For the doctor said it would not necessarily prove fatal at once. He called it a sort of softening of the brain—or something of the kind. (Smiles sadly.) I think that expression sounds so nice. It always sets me thinking of cherry-colored velvet—something soft and delicate to stroke.

Mrs. Alving.—(Screams.) Oswald!

Oswald.—(Springs up and paces the room.) And now you have taken Regina from me. If I'd only had her! She would have come to the rescue, I know.

Mrs. Alving.—(Goes to him.) What do you mean by that, my darling boy? Is there any help in the world that I wouldn't give you?

Oswald.—When I got over my attack in Paris, the doctor told me that when it came again—and it will come again—there would be no more hope.

Mrs. Alving.—He was heartless enough——

Oswald.—I demanded it of him. I told him I had preparations to make. (He smiles cunningly.) And so I had. (He takes a little box from his inner breast pocket and opens it.) Mother, do you see these?

Mrs. Alving.—What is that?

Oswald.—Morphia powder.

Mrs. Alving.—(Looks horrified at him.) Oswald—my boy?

Oswald.—I have scraped together twelve pilules——

Mrs. Alving.—(Snatches at it.) Give me the box, Oswald.

Oswald.—Not yet, mother. (He hides the box again in his pocket.)

Mrs. Alving.—I shall never survive this.

Oswald.—It must be survived. Now, if I had Regina here, I should have told her how it stood with me, and begged her to come to the rescue at the last. She would have done it. I'm certain she would.

Mrs. Alving.—Never!

Oswald.—When the horror had come upon me, and she saw me lying there helpless, like a little new-born baby, impotent, lost, helpless, past all saving——

Mrs. Alving.—Never in all the world would Regina have done this.

Oswald.—Regina would have done it. Regina was so splendidly light-hearted. And she would soon have wearied of nursing an invalid like me——

Mrs. Alving.—Then heaven be praised that Regina is not here.

Oswald.—Well, then, it is you that must come to the rescue, mother.

Mrs. Alving.—(Screams aloud.) I!

Oswald.—Who is nearer to it than you?

Mrs. Alving.—I! your mother!

Oswald.—For that very reason.

Mrs. Alving.—I, who gave you life!

Oswald.—I never asked you for life. And what sort of a life is it that you have given me? I will not have it. You shall take it back again.

Mrs. Alving.—Help! help! (She runs out into the hall.)

Oswald.—(Going after her.) Don't leave me. Where are you going?

Mrs. Alving.—(In the hall.) To fetch the doctor, Oswald. Let me go.

Oswald.—(Also outside.) You shall not go. And no one shall come in. (The locking of the door is heard.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Comes in again.) Oswald—Oswald!—my child!

Oswald.—(Follows her.) Have you a mother's heart for me, and yet can see me suffer from this unutterable dread?

Mrs. Alving.—(After a moment's silence, commands herself and says:) Here is my hand upon it.

Oswald.—Will you—

Mrs. Alving.—If it is ever necessary. But it will never be necessary. No, no; it is impossible.

Oswald.—Well, let us hope so, and let us live together as long as we can. Thank you, mother. (He sits down in the arm-chair which Mrs. Alving has moved to the sofa. Day is breaking. The lamp is still burning on the table.)

Mrs. Alving.—(Drawing near, cautiously.) Do you feel calm, now?

Oswald.—Yes.

Mrs. Alving.—(Bending over him.) It has been a dreadful fancy of yours, Oswald—nothing but a fancy. You have not been able to bear all this excitement. But now you shall have a long rest; at home with your own mother, my own blessed boy. Everything you point to you shall have, just as when you were a little child. There, now! That crisis is over now. You see how easily it passed. Oh! I was sure it would—

And do you see, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have? Brilliant sunshine! Now you will really be able to see your home. (She goes to the table and puts the lamp out. Sunrise. The glacier and the snow-peaks in the background glow in the morning light.)

Oswald.—(Sits in the arm-chair with his back toward the landscape, without moving. Suddenly he says:) Mother, give me the sun.

Mrs. Alving.—(By the table, starts and looks at him.) What do you say?

Oswald.—(Repeats, in a dull, toneless voice:) The sun. The sun.

Mrs. Alving.—(Goes to him.) Oswald, what is the matter with you? (Oswald seems to shrink together in the chair; all his muscles relax; his face is expressionless, his eyes have a glassy stare. Mrs. Alving is quivering with terror.) What is this? (Shrieeks.) Oswald, what is the matter with you? (Falls on her knees beside him and shakes him.) Oswald, Oswald! look at me! Don't you know me?

Oswald.—(Tonelessly as before.) The sun. The sun.

Mrs. Alving.—(Springs up in despair, intertwines her hands in her hair and shrieks.) I can't bear it. (Whispers as though petrified.) I can't bear it! Never! (Suddenly.) Where has he got them? (Fumbles hastily in his breast.) Here! (Shrinks back a few steps and screams.) No, no, no! Yes!—No, no! (She stands a few steps from him, with her hands twisted in her hair, and stares at him in speechless terror.)

Oswald.—(Sits motionless, as before, and says:) The sun. The sun.

The play of *Ghosts* justly ranks as one of Ibsen's best dramatic efforts, and, perhaps, most truthfully of all reflects his general style. One does not find in it any great intricacy of plot, yet enough to excite and sustain interest throughout—enough to give the author firm dramatic standing ground, and his audience the pleasurable thrill that accompanies awakened curiosity. In

its general structure the play observes with care the standard dramatic formula of time, place and circumstance, while in its style of speech it is terse, strong and aptly expressive. Of the high place of such a play in dramatic literature there can be no manner of doubt, nor can there be a question as to its ethical value. In the latter respect it is in the true Ibsen vein, intolerant of the foibles that weaken and demoralize society, keen in all sociological matters, and abundantly hintful of the necessity for better observance of psychological laws. Herein lies the author's greatest strength. It subtracts nothing from his dramatic power to say that in his works he has proved to be a magnificent and forceful moral teacher; one ever welcome to his own countrymen and the world at large.



Baldwin

Stanley Nelson

1885-1962

Stanley Nelson
1885-1962
A Biography
by Stanley Nelson

1962

1962-1963

From the Great War to the end of the 1960s, Stanley Nelson was a powerful and respected figure in the commercial and industrial circles of Europe. In his return, he was a man of the nation, his court and people, and a man of the great country which nurtured his memory and traditions and his life.

Russian Drama

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Prologue



RUSSIAN DRAMA.—Until the end of the seventeenth century Russia, then commonly called Muscovy, lay sprawling on the east of Europe. It consisted of a weltering mass of semi-civilized tribes, Christianized, yet not without relics of primitive Paganism. Towards 1700 Peter, the strenuous ruler of this vast region, visited Western Europe to learn the methods of its progress. The fur-clad Tzar doffed his royal robes and labored as a shipwright in Holland. A few years later, at Poltava, he wrecked the mad ambition of Charles XII. of Sweden, and built St. Petersburg in the

PROLOGUE

marshes of the Neva. The slumbering giant of the East had been aroused to consciousness of his strength, and had started on the highway of Empire.

Peter's great successor, Catherine II., transferred to her palace the refined usages of the court of Louis XV., of France, made French literature the fashion, and herself wrote comedies in the approved style.

From the eleventh century the scanty literature of Russia had consisted of religious manuals and monkish chronicles, though among the people there were cherished rude ballads, which were later turned into prose narratives. When printing was introduced in the sixteenth century it was strictly confined to religious and historical works. Not until the seventeenth century did the belated religious drama appear.

But under the energetic Peter's rule came translations from French as well as Latin classics. Lomonosov was indefatigable in writing verse and prose, essays and tragedies, while others adhered to the beaten track of history. Under Catherine II. a lively generation of poets sprang up. Lyrics and epics abounded, but fables were still more

PROLOGUE

popular. Denis von Viezin, who had visited France, produced genuine national comedies, ridiculing the coarse features of Russian society and exposing the cruel treatment of serfs. But the laureate of the court was Derjavine, whose odes became known throughout Europe. Some ambitious writers incurred the displeasure of the Tzarina, and were banished to Siberia.

In the reign of Alexander I., at the opening of the nineteenth century, the leaders in literature were the historian Karamzin, the fabulist Krilov, the poet Jukovski, and Pushkin, who imitated Byron's *Don Juan*, and excelled him in the drama. But the finest specimen of Russian comedy is *The Inspector*, by Gogol, which is presented entire in this volume. Strange to say, Gogol sank into religious melancholy and sought to destroy all his works.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century knowledge of Russian literature spread like a flood through Western Europe and America. The novels of Gogol, Turgenieff and Dostoievski became familiar, but above all the powerful writings of Count Les Tolstoi attracted attention. This is undoubtedly owing to his peculiar religious

PROLOGUE

and social ideas. A nobleman by birth, he assumed a peasant's dress and mode of life, and, when he ceased writing novels, issued creeds and confessions and short stories. His drama, *The Power of Darkness*, thoroughly deserves its name by its revelation of evil.

Recent writers have but followed in the footsteps of these great masters of the latter half of the nineteenth century; and, while they have not excelled their masterpieces, they have maintained the reputation of their country in the drama and novel.

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Russian Drama.

I.

Dawn of Russian Literature.

Russian literature may be divided into oral and written, the former including what are known as *bilini*, or tales of old times, which have come down to us in great numbers, as sung by wandering minstrels all over the country. It is only within the nineteenth century that they have been collected and divided into cycles, including those of the older heroes; of Vladimir, prince of Kiev; of Novgorod, of Moscow, of the Cossacks, of Peter the Great, and the modern period. These poems, if such they may be called, are not in rhyme; but there is a certain cadence which is preserved throughout. For centuries these peasant songs attracted no attention, until, in the reign of Alexander I, Nikolai Karamzin presented to the Russians a past of which they had known but little. Within more recent times, many

editors and publishers have busied themselves over collections extending far back into the Middle Ages.

Legendary Cycles.

In the first cycle we find the repetition of certain conventional phrases characteristic of all ancient poetry, from Homer downward, as "the damp earth," the "green vine," and "the bright sun." The heroes of this cycle are monstrous beings, and seem to be merely impersonations of the powers of nature. Sometimes we have giants of the mountain, as Sviatogor, and the serpent Gorinich, the latter living in caves and having a care of the precious metals. In another personage the qualities of the giant and the serpent are united. There is also the pagan idol, who is a great glutton, and Nightingale the Robber, who terrifies travellers and lives in a nest built upon six oaks.

In the second cycle the legends group themselves round the celebrated prince, Vladimir of Kiev, in whose time the Christian religion was introduced into Russia. The chief hero is Ilya Murometz, who performs prodigies of valor, and is of gigantic stature and superhuman strength. The cycle of Novgorod deals with the stories of Vasilü-Buslaevich and Sadko, the rich merchant. The fourth cycle has for its theme the aristocracy, with Moscow as the capital of the future empire. We now hear of the taking of Kazan, of the conquest of Siberia by Yermak, of Ivan the Terrible and his confidant. It is worthy of note that in the popular traditions Ivan, in spite of his cruelties, is not spoken of

with hatred. Many spirited poems are devoted to the achievements of Stenka Razia, the bold robber of the Volga, who was long a popular hero. The cycle of Peter the Great is a very interesting one. We have songs in abundance on the wonderful achievements of the mighty tzar, and there is also a poem on his death. The Cossack songs dwell on the glories of the sech, the sufferings of the people from the invasion of Turks and Mongols, and the fall of the Cossack republic. Belonging to the modern period are many songs on Napoleon. There are also large collections of religious poems, many of which contain very curious legends, forming a complete record of the beliefs of the Middle Ages, together with ample materials for the study of comparative mythology and folk-lore.

Written and Printed Works.

The earliest written work in the Russian language was a recension of the Slavonic gospels, dated 1056-7, and this was followed in 1073 by the *Miscellany* of Sviotoslaff, a kind of Russian encyclopædia compiled from Greek sources for that prince by John the deacon. Next came the *Discourse Concerning the Old and New Testament*, by the metropolitan of Kiev, in which there is a panegyric on Prince Vladimir, the hero of much popular poetry. As elsewhere in Europe during the Middle Ages, the monks were the only conservators of learning; but they were an ungodly crew, as we learn from the writings of Theodosius, one of the Pestcherski cloister. Paganism, he says, is still in vogue among the

people, unrebuked by the clergy, many of whom have given themselves over to drunkenness. A *Discourse to the Brethren* was also written by Zhidiata, bishop of Novgorod.

Russian history, though still largely mingled with tradition, begins with the *Chronicle* of Nestor, also a monk of the Pestcherski cloister at Kiev, whose records, beginning with the deluge, as did those of other eleventh century annalists, extend, with only two breaks, to the time of Alexis Mikhailovich, father of Peter the Great.

It was not until 1564 that the first book was printed, though a printing-press was set up at Moscow some years before. The book, which contained the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Epistles*, stirred up the enmity of those who earned their living as copyists, and with them sided many priestly fanatics, who thought it degrading that the sacred works should be multiplied by such an art, just as the Arabs still refuse to allow the Koran to be printed. Up to 1600 only sixteen books had been printed in Moscow or elsewhere in the empire. In the *Book of Household Management*, which belongs to the time of Ivan the Terrible, is a faithful picture of the Russia of the age, with all its barbarism and ignorance, showing the unbounded authority of the husband in his household, even to the personal chastisement of his wife, whose chief duty is to minister to his wants.

To the reign of the first Romanoffs belongs the story of the siege of Azov, a prose poem, in which is described, in inflated style, how, in 1637, a body of Cossacks triumphantly repelled the attacks of the Turks. There is

also an account of the siege of the Troitza monastery by the Poles, during the so-called period of troubles, which deals with the adventures of the false Demetrius and the Polish invasion that followed. But the most important work of this period is by Gregory Karpoff Kotoshikhin, who draws a sad picture of his native land, with ignorance, cruelty and superstition everywhere rampant. It is chiefly from his description that we can reconstruct the Russia of the time before Peter the Great, as, later, Zabelin has done in his work on domestic life. No less gloomy is the story of the Serb, Yuri Krizhanich, who suggests education as a remedy, and to that end wrote a critical Servian grammar, with comparisons of the Russian, Polish and Croatian languages. The struggles of the patriarch Nikon with the czar were described by Shusherin and again by Dean Stanley in his *Lectures on the Eastern Church*. This famous divine, whose emendations of the sacred books, made necessary by the blunders of generations of copyists, led to a schism in the Russian church, was banished to Siberia, and wrote most of his works in Tobolsk. His portrait, tomb and robes, still preserved in Moscow, show that he was a man seven feet in stature. With Simeon Polotzki, who was educated in Kiev, then in Polish territory, and came to Moscow about 1665, ends the old period of Russian literature. He was tutor to Feodor, son of the emperor Alexis, and to him was partly due the introduction of western culture into Russia. Among his works are several poems and religious dramas, the latter including *The Prodigal Son* and *Nebuchadnezzar*. All were fairly representative of their

era, and showed the possibilities of authorship along their respective lines.

The Religious Drama.

The Religious drama in its earliest form, that of Mysteries, was introduced into Russia from Poland in the beginning of the twelfth century. As Tiechonnaravoff states in his *Origin of the Russian Theatre*, they were known under the name of Religious Dialogues, or simply as Histories, and were at first played exclusively in monasteries; nor is it till 1603 that we read of their being performed by students in the universities and public schools in Polish or Latin. The earliest Latin Dialogue that has come down to us is entitled *Adam*, and bears on its title page the date 1507; the earliest in Polish is *The Life of the Savior from His Entry Into Jerusalem*, and was composed by a Dominican of Cracow, in the year 1533. The latter describes the closing events in Christ's earthly career so minutely that it consists of more than a hundred scenes, and four days were required for its presentation.

The Vertep.

So far, the history of the early drama in Russia does not differ from that of other countries. But there was another class of dramatic representations peculiar to Russia, and which were as essentially popular as the Mysteries were ecclesiastical. These were exhibited in a species of perambulating booth called "Vertep," and

divided into three stories; the first and third of which were occupied by the performing figures, the middle one being devoted to the machinery necessary to put the marionettes in motion. They formed the chief attraction at the large fairs held in the principal cities during the Christmas holidays, and the card-figures consisted of the Virgin, Joseph, the Savior, Angels, Shepherds, and the Magi. As might be expected in these Christmas pieces, the Nativity and the Massacre of the Innocents usually formed the subjects. To represent the latter, other characters were introduced, including Herod, Death, in the shape of a skeleton, and the Devil, who came in at the end to carry off the soul of the godless monarch.

Like the Mysteries, the Vertep plays were at first of a strictly religious character, but were gradually changed into rude satires on contemporary life and manners. In their earlier form they were patronized by the clergy, who constantly lent their churches for these performances, but later they were strictly forbidden. The severest ecclesiastical prohibitions, however, were of no avail, and they continued to enjoy popular favor till as late as the seventeenth century. Not that the Church ever neglected the drama as a means of educating the people. It had its three annual scenic festivities, or acts. The first represented the delivery of the Three Children from the furnace of fire, and was played at Christmas both in Moscow and Novgorod; the second, dating from the fifteenth century, represented the entry of the Savior into Jerusalem, and was performed on Palm Sunday; the third, played on Sunday in Carnival

week, was preceded by religious ceremonies of unusual solemnity, and depicted the final judgment.

Very few of these Mysteries have been preserved, and those that we possess are characterized by the same peculiarities which have been remarked in a previous volume in connection with English miracle-plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is a similar confusion of the terms tragedy and comedy in their titles, an equally profound indifference to chronology, and a like mixture of real with imaginary personages. Thus, in the so-called "pitiful comedy" of *Adam and Eve*, printed at Kiev about 1675, it is only the prologue that is in any way concerned with the story of our first parents; the four acts of which it is composed being devoted to the exploits of Alexis Michaelovitch, and both biblical and allegorical personages mingle freely with historical characters throughout the drama. Some of the Mysteries were written with a polemical object. The author, for instance, of *The Martyrdom of Stephen*, evidently a Catholic, divulges the intention with which his play was produced, when he tells us in the prologue that "Peter was undeservedly deprived of his supremacy," and further dilates on the "juggling tricks" of Sophia, who, contrary to all justice, had "usurped her brother's rights."

Origin of the Theatre.

It is, however, to the Vertep that we trace the origin of the modern Russian theatre. As already remarked, these shows began, from about the middle of the seven-

teenth century, to lose their exclusively religious character, and, in place of biblical legends, represented humorous scenes, in which history and the follies of the period were broadly caricatured. This latter form of drama corresponds to the English interludes, which were most in favor a little before the time of Shakespeare. Of the verteps which have been preserved, the majority have at least one rascolnik among their personages, the word, though originally meaning a schismatic, being commonly applied to those separatists who adhered to the use of the mass-books and rituals such as they were before their revision by Nikon. The opposition made by these sectarians to the religious reform inaugurated by the government afforded an unfailing theme of satire. In one of them, the rascolnik laments the backslidings of the age, which has so far lapsed from the pure faith that "even old believers began to wear short coats in lieu of the long flowing robe, and to shave their beards," innovations sufficiently startling to justify the prediction that "before long Antichrist will appear on earth." In 1705, about which time the play was produced, an imperial decree had been issued, recommending, and in some cases commanding, government clerks to adopt the foreign mode of dress and to shave the beard. This edict was at variance, not only with fashion, but with the old Russian proverb: "Man is made in God's image. Witness his beard." Thus it provoked so much opposition that a certain priest was commissioned by the synodical authorities to write a tract, "*On the Image and Likeness of God in Man,*" in which a number of learned arguments are adduced from the

Bible and the Fathers to prove that the beard may be cut off without imperilling salvation or losing the marks of our heavenly origin. If, at this day, we are able to divest such a contest of its comic elements, we must continue to see in it the same earnestness and fervor and acrimony that have characterized like opposition to dramatic progress at many times and in many places.

School Plays.

As early as 1721 it was ordered that the students of all public seminaries "should play comedies twice in a year." Nor were these plays restricted to Mysteries or even Interludes, but included translations and adaptations from the work of foreign dramatists. Molière would seem to have been the favorite author, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules* both being played in the same year at the Moscow academy. Among the public schools, the cadet corps at St. Petersburg enjoyed a high reputation for the zeal with which its teachers promoted the study of modern languages and literature. These efforts were not lost upon the pupils, who formed among themselves an amateur literary society, the members of which were accustomed once a week to meet and read original compositions in prose and verse. There was one pupil whose papers were considered to be of such superior merit that they were submitted by the president of the society to the authorities of the corps, and a selection from the best of them was published at the expense of the establishment.

This pupil was Alexander Sumarokoff, destined to become famous as "the founder of the Russian theatre."

Sumarokoff.

Alexander Petrovitch Sumarokoff was born at St. Petersburg, in 1718, and entered the cadet corps in his fourteenth year. His ambition was naturally excited by the special marks of favor with which his first productions had been received, and, on leaving school, in 1740, he commenced writing for the stage, taking the plays of Racine and Voltaire as his models. The first result of his labors was a tragedy entitled *Khoreff*, which was played by royal command at the palace in presence of the empress Elizabeth. Among the audience was the son of a Yarosloff tradesman, named Volkoff, upon whom the performance produced such an effect that, on returning to his native town, he hired a coach-house, and, with the assistance of a few friends, gave a series of theatrical entertainments. The building was little better than a barn, the pieces played of no literary value, the scenery most meagre in quantity and kind, the actors inexperienced amateurs; but, happily, the audiences were not critical, and the undertaking proved so successful that within a few years a regular theatre was built, and Volkoff appointed its director.

In 1756 a theatre was opened at St. Petersburg, under the management of Sumarokoff, the principal actor being Volkoff, who is described as "a man of good parts and liberal education." It is interesting to notice that among the plays produced were an adaptation of Shake-

speare's *Hamlet*, in which the original is very closely followed, and a prose translation of *Julius Cæsar*, by an unknown writer. To judge from the complaints with which Sumarokoff's letters are filled, the post of director was as laborious as it was thankless. On one occasion, for example, he piteously and comically remarks: "Many a man has been made a drunkard by good fortune; will it be astonishing if I am driven to drink by my troubles?" The majority, however, of his misfortunes must be attributed to his vain and domineering character, and to the exaggerated estimate which he formed of his own genius. Owing to the mean and petulant jealousy with which he regarded his more eminent contemporaries, he was at variance, during his whole life, with all who ventured to dispute his supremacy in the world of letters. These quarrels were not seldom characterized by a brutality of phrase that shows to what a degree he was envious of all celebrity which did not fall to his own share. "Thank God," he exclaimed, as he stood over the grave of Lomonosoff—an indifferent dramatist, but the greatest lyric poet of the age—"the fool is quieted at last, and the cur will bark no more."

Sumarokoff was at least impartial in his hatreds, for it would be difficult to mention the name of a single Russian writer of the period who was not at one time or another exposed to his abuse, and equally difficult to select one of his letters in which he does not complain of some one or something. He regarded himself as "the Racine of the North," did not wish any plays but his own to be put on the stage of his theatre, and pestered the court so persistently with his complaints about

"neglected genius," that Catherine once exclaimed, with more truth than politeness, "the man is out of his mind, and will always be a conceited ass." Though the verdict may be harsh, it is more than justified by the extravagantly ludicrous praises which Sumarokoff was pleased to lavish on himself. "Not alone in the drama," he boastingly exclaims, "but in every kind of poetry, I am the only author in Russia;" and along with some complimentary verses addressed to Catherine he sent a letter in which he complacently reminds her, "the reign of Augustus has found its Horace." Soon after he had ceased to be director of the theatre he removed to Moscow, where he composed his tragedy, *Demetrius the Pretender*, besides three comedies which were intended to "purify and reform the dissolute habits and the crass ignorance" of that city. "Alas! Moscow requires a hundred Molières, and I am alone," whines the poor comedian. But to all such whimperings his audiences might reasonably have replied, "Physician, heal thyself," for, tortured with the idea that his genius was not duly appreciated, harassed by domestic troubles and the abandonment of her home by his wife, and burdened with heavy debts, Sumarokoff sought relief in deep potations; and intemperance, no doubt, hastened his death, which took place in 1777.

Sumarokoff as a Dramatist.

Sumarokoff occupies the same position in the dramatic literature as Lomonosoff in the lyric poetry of Russia. They were the first to accept the French classics as

models of literary excellence; but while in the odes of Lomonosoff there is genuine poetic feeling, there is an utter absence of inspiration in the dramas of Sumarokoff. In spite of his slavish observance of the three unities, and all those other laws by which the pseudo-classicists had reduced poetry to a mere mechanical art, his imitation is at the best but a surface one. His tragedies represent one passion, never the whole character of a man in all its manifestations; they describe a feeling rather than show us human nature modified and influenced by the surrounding circumstances of individual life. As with Racine, love is the prevailing passion in the tragedies of the Russian dramatist. But while the love of Hermione has its subtle characteristics which distinguish and separate it from the love of Roxana, the heroines of Sumarokoff, howsoever he may christen them, all love and express their love in one and the same stereotyped fashion. There is no individuality in their utterances; there is no reason, beyond the caprice of a poet, why the speeches of an Olga should not be assigned to an Osnielda. Racine has often been reproached with turning his Romans and Greeks into Frenchmen. We cannot accuse Sumarokoff of having transformed them into Russians. They have, it is true, Russian names; but there is nothing in their sentiments, their speech, or their actions, which can be brought into harmony either with the time in which they lived or with the people whom they are supposed to represent. Beyond their names, there is absolutely nothing Russian about them.

The success which Sumarokoff's tragedies, with all their shortcomings, enjoyed for a long time, is due

to the fact that, unlike those of Lomonosoff, they are not simply didactic, but abound with situations that can scarcely fail to produce an effect upon the stage. The true integrity of plot may not always be well sustained; but there is at least action and movement in his plays. Most of them have two or three "farewell scenes," which, according to Karamsin, formed Sumarokoff's strong point; and Catherine, in one of her letters to Voltaire, eulogizes their tenderness and pathos. Another reason for their temporary popularity is, perhaps, to be found in the thoroughness with which they reflect the ideas of the eighteenth century. Thus, in *Demetrius the Pretender*, we have a diatribe against the abuses of the Papal power; while in another of his dramas, entitled *Mstieslaff*, the chief character is little more than the mouthpiece of Montesquieu, whose opinions on love, honor and education are almost literally reproduced.

Khoreff.

Some of Sumarokoff's dramas, as *Khoreff*, *Demetrius the Pretender*, and *Mstieslaff*, profess to be historical tragedies; though, from the freedom the poet has employed in treating historical events, they scarcely deserve the name. In *Khoreff* we have the story of Kie, the reputed founder of Kiev, whose brother Khoreff falls in love with Osnielda, the captive daughter of Zavloch, governor of the city. His love is discovered, and Kie, fearful lest the charms of Osnielda should have overcome the patriotism of his brother, who is appointed

to lead out a large force against her father, determines to put her to death. The resolve is barely executed when the sword of the defeated rebel is brought to Kiev by a herald from his brother. Khoreff, on hearing of the suspicions to which he has been exposed, and their cruel result, kills himself in despair. The play abounds in the tragic element, and all its parts are well sustained throughout, though the style must be accounted harsh even for its time. It doubtless added even more to Sumarokoff's reputation than *Demetrius the Pretender*.

Semiera.

The conflict between love and duty, which constitutes the leading idea in *Khoreff*, is again represented under a different aspect in the tragedy of *Semiera*. Oleg has wrested Kiev from the hands of Oscold, its reigning prince; and the dethroned monarch, having vainly attempted to recover his lost authority, is cast into prison and condemned to death. In the meantime, Rostislaff, Oleg's son, has become enamored of Semiera, the daughter of Oscold, and, moved by her piteous prayers, determines to free her father. But when the liberated chieftain, at the head of those nobles who still remained faithful to his cause, marches against Oleg, the claims of patriotism and duty, for a while silenced by the voice of love, resume their sway, and it is Rostislaff who, by his daring and bravery, defeats the enemy and saves his father in the very thick of the bloody fight. It will be observed that here, as in many other places, Sumarokoff has borrowed from Voltaire, and there is a striking re-

DEMETRIUS THE PRETENDER

After an original painting by P. Van Den Bos

Demetrius, under the pretence of being the son of Ivan the Terrible, claimed the Tzarship of Russia. He became the hero of Sumarokoff's tragic masterpiece, DEMETRIUS, THE SON OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE, which ranks second only to that in Shakespeare's RICHARD III.



semblance between the situation in which Rostislaff is placed and that which Tite occupies in Voltaire's *Brute*. Other resemblances evidence this borrowing quality, but they are not of a character to detract seriously from the author's originality.

Demetrius the Pretender.

Love, or rather the sentimental affectation which frequently passes for love, forms the subject of *Demetrius the Pretender*. Demetrius has grown tired of his Polish wife, and fixes his affections on Ksenia, the daughter of Shouisky, one of his nobles; but the maiden's previous betrothal to a young Galician prince is a fatal hindrance to the accomplishment of his desires. Baffled in his attempts to turn her from her former love, the tyrant determines to vent his displeasure on Shouisky; and the latter, driven to extremities, fomented an insurrection among the nobles. They are only too glad to seize any pretext for avenging the numberless wrongs they have had to endure under the cruel rule of the Pretender, and the revolt soon assumes such serious proportions that Demetrius, to avoid falling into the hands of his enemies, slays himself. After his wonted fashion, Sumarokoff has completely falsified history; and Demetrius, who in reality was a tolerant and merciful sovereign, is represented as a villain of the blackest dye. As an example of the melodramatic style in which the whole tragedy is written, may be quoted the soliloquy pronounced by the hero at the moment when he hears the revolted nobles thundering at the gates of his

palace; many of the ideas, it will be observed, are borrowed from Shakespeare's *Richard III*:

The crown no more holds firmly on my head,
And the end of my greatness is at hand.
Each moment I await the sudden change.
Oh, threatening walls of Kremlin palace,
Methinks, each hour I hear ye plead against me:
Malefactor! thou art our enemy and all the country's
curse;

The citizens cry out, we have been despoiled by thee;
And the temples sob forth, we have been deluged by
blood.

All the fair pleasaunces round Moscow lie waste,
And hell from lowest depths has oped its mouth upon me.

I see the dreary steep that leads to Hades,
I see the tortured ghosts that people Tartarus,
I see and feel already the flames of Gehenna.
I gaze up to heaven, the blissful seat of Paradise,
Where good tzars rest, in all the beauty of nature,
And angels embathe them with the dew of Paradise.
But to me, the accursed, what hope remains?
There I shall be tortured, even as I am tortured here.
No longer a crowned monarch in his royal city,
But an outlawed criminal tormented in hell,
I perish, even as my people through me have perished.

Flee, tyrant, flee! but whom to flee, myself?
For I see none other but myself.
Flee! but whither? thou bearest thy hell with thee.
The assassin is upon thee, flee! but I am that assassin.
Thus do I fear myself and mine own shadow.
Vengeance! but on whom? myself? avenge myself?
I love myself; yet wherefore I love myself, I cannot say.
All things cry out against me:—plunderings, perverted
judgments,

Each bloody crime, all with one voice cry upon me.
My life is a curse, my death will be a blessing, to every
man.

How I envy the lot of the very poorest of my subjects!

For the beggar in his poverty will at times find rest,
While I upon a throne cannot find a moment's peace.
Be patient, then, and vanquish, even as thou didst win
thy throne by treachery;
Plague and be plagued; live and die a tyrant.

Sumarokoff's Comedies.

The comedies of Sumarokoff, of which *The Usurer*, *The Guardian*, and *Tressotinius, or the Pedant*, are the principal ones, never enjoyed the favor which was for a time extended to his tragedies, and have long been forgotten. They are badly constructed, so far as plot is concerned, and are equally weak in characterization; while the vices against which they are directed are not so much exposed in action as denounced in elaborate tirades. Not unfrequently these tirades are rather in the nature of invective than of satire; as where he speaks of lawyers, his special object of aversion, as "descendants of Ham," and "bosom friends of the Devil;" or where he declares that the only effect produced by the reforms of Peter on the nobility has been "to change them from powdered men to powdered apes." The vices which he mostly castigates are the same as those that had already provoked the satire of *Kantemier and Catherine*; but his gall is chiefly excited by the corruption which in his time generally prevailed among the judges. "A corrupt judge," he angrily exclaims, "is worse than a thief, worse than the foulest of reptiles." It required, however, a century of satirists before public opinion in Russia became sufficiently pronounced to compel the legislator

to free the administration of justice from venal partiality, and to make the magistrate the just decider between right and wrong.

Sumarokoff himself claimed to have rendered priceless service to the development of dramatic art in Russia. "That which Athens once possessed," he writes with the calm assurance peculiar to the man, "Russia now enjoys, thanks to my labors. That which Germany, spite of her many writers, has not obtained—a national drama—I alone have created in a country where the art of literature is only beginning to be understood, and whose language has only now acquired purity and polish." Posterity has refused to endorse this extravagant self-laudation, but has chosen rather to accept the verdict of Belinsky, one of the greatest of Russian critics, and regard Sumarokoff as "a poor littérateur; a conceited, talentless versifier; a weak, contemptible thinker, utterly ignorant of the higher laws of art."

11.

Peter the Great and Catherine the Great.

In the reigns of Peter the Great and Catherine II was concentrated all that there was of literary progress to the end of the eighteenth century. To the reforms of Peter the Great Russia owes her existence as a European nation, or indeed as a nation at all, in the proper sense of the word. Before his time Russia was merely the object of national sentiment; after him she became the object of national thought. In the days of Catherine the Russians were no longer stamped as barbarians, even by the French, whose language, literature and drama they freely borrowed.

Russian Illiteracy.

Compared with the illiteracy that prevailed in Russia before the reign of Peter the Great, the mediæval ages elsewhere in Europe formed a period of comparative enlightenment. The only hopeful feature was that the self-delusion which characterizes all nations that have long been isolated was rudely shaken, and that foreign intercourse was beginning to disclose to the Muscovites the abysses of their own ignorance.

From the first, seeking after knowledge was condemned by the priests, whose sermons were directed against the blind imitation of foreigners. Even Nikon was alarmed at the innovations introduced from abroad, and in his fanaticism burned pictures, destroyed an organ, and cut to pieces the liveries of his servants. In a collection of spiritual precepts are the following sentences: "Abominable before God is he who studies geometry. Prefer simplicity to wisdom. That which is higher than you, never seek to explore; that which is deeper than you, never seek to fathom; but the learning which comes from God and is given to you ready-made, that keep for yourself."

The Kremlin.

Yet Moscow presented then one of the finest specimens of civic architecture in the world. The Kremlin had attained the full development of its architectural beauty; the typical harmony of its configuration was not yet destroyed by those modern superstructures which spoil it in our days; and with the gable roof of its palaces painted in checks, with the towers of its white walls overlooking the river, with the golden cupolas of its churches and the medley of its belfries rising in the air and glittering in the sunshine, it presented already in those times that enchanting spectacle which, more than a century later, stopped Napoleon in his march, and interrupted the sombre current of his thought with a moment of æsthetical delight. Inside this Kremlin, in this citadel of palaces and churches,

where the hours of the day were marked by ecclesiastical services, where the sacerdotal vestments and the royal mantles intermingled in the gorgeousness of alternating ritual and ceremonial, strange things were taking place in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The tzar, his family, his court, seemed given over to a new kind of amusement; in the private apartments of the palace, in the presence of his majesty, a German theatrical company gave performances under the direction of Godfried Gregory, the Lutheran clergyman of the German suburb.

Early Theatricals.

In 1672, three days after the birth of his son Peter, Tzar Alexis ordered Gregory to prepare theatrical entertainments. The first piece given had for its subject *Esther and Ahasuerus*; then came *Judith*, *Joseph*, *Adam and Eve*, and others; at first in German, but soon Russian boys were intrusted to the pastor, to be taught the art of acting; translations were made into Russian, and finally the first original comedy was written by Simeon of Polotsk. This learned monk was a teacher of the tzar's children, and, at the same time, poet laureate of the court. His comedy, entitled *The Prodigal Son*, has been preserved in an illustrated edition of the time, and still makes interesting reading. The author took an important part in the literary passion which invaded the court; his lessons were so attractive, so clever—sometimes in verse to make it easier for the memory—that the tzar's daughter, for

the first time since the Tartar yoke, left her maiden apartments. Princess Sophia shared the benefits of Simeon's lessons with her eldest brother, Theodor. Later she became herself a writer; she composed a tragedy on Esther; she is said to have made attempts at translating Molière—at least Molière's *Physician in Spite of Himself* was represented in her private apartments.

The Courtiers of Alexis.

A man who became a prominent figure during Princess Sophia's regency took part in this performance; this was Prince Galitzin, of whom the Polish envoy, De la Neuville, says that he cherished vast plans of reform; he was of a refined character, and in his mind the necessity of emancipating the peasants, who had been bound to the soil in the last years of the preceding century, already presented itself as an inevitable condition of national prosperity. He can be taken as the precursor of that Russian aristocracy which, a century later, would swarm around the throne of Catherine the Great—refined, intellectual, but idealistic and with no deep roots in practical life.

Another interesting personality is Ordyn Naschokin, a man widely different from Prince Galitzin, and very practical in action; he was the first Russian diplomatist. Involved in the hardest difficulties of the Little Russian and Baltic questions, he gained the esteem of the Swedish and Polish statesmen with whom he had to deal. A passionate champion of foreign ideas, he was

a harsh critic of Muscovite customs, and made numerous enemies in society by his habit of sacrificing personal consideration to public affairs. He was an ardent advocate of a Russian sea and a Russian fleet. After his type were shaped the associates of Peter the Great.

We must not overlook Tzar Alexis' intimate friend, Artamon Matveyev. His house was the gathering place of the intellectual elements of the time; the German suburb enjoyed his warmest sympathies, so that his enemies called him "Father of the Germans;" he had also been the first promoter of the theatrical movement. In his house, one day, Tzar Alexis met a handsome girl, who impressed him with her soft manners and beautiful black eyes; this was the host's pupil, Nathaly Narishkin. The tzar was a widower at that time; she became his wife, and on May 30, 1672, brought into the world a son, who was called Peter, afterward famous as Peter the Great.

Such was the atmosphere in which grew and lived the children of Tzar Alexis. These were the mild and noble Theodor, who ruled during six years after his father; the energetic and ambitious Sophia, who succeeded after Theodor's death, in 1682, in being proclaimed regent in the name of her two brothers; the delicate and feeble-minded John, and Theodor's god-child, little Peter, with the black curly hair.

Peter the Strenuous.

The lad who became the friend and comrade of the artisans of the German suburb soon left childhood be-

hind him. The military tournaments with the children of domestics and boyars are soon transformed; that which was a plaything becomes a well-disciplined regiment; the coachman's son, Alexashka, is the future serene highness; Prince Menshikov, minister of war; and the future field-marshal, Prince Galitzin, is in the ranks of that child-army. The little boats on the pond of the royal garden are too insignificant; arsenals are ransacked; an old boat is found among pieces of armor and household lumber; it is restored and launched on the water; the pond is too small; Peter leaves for the Pereiaslav lake and forgets everything on his favorite element. Now and then he sends a few hasty lines to his mother: "Your son, Peter, abiding in labor, asks for your blessing and wishes to know of your health. As to us, thanks to your prayers, things are all right. The lake is free of ice, and all the vessels, except the big ship, are finished." "Abiding in labor"—from seventeen till the day of his death—that self-applied epithet will never leave him. On September 12, 1689, all play is put an end to; the partisans of Princess Sophia and those of Peter's mother had come to a bloody conflict; the princess regent is deposed and relegated to a convent; Peter and John remain masters. But the invalid John is merely a figure-head; the reign of Peter the Great begins.

Peter's Campaigns.

It is impossible here to represent the proportions and to follow the entire course of his reforms. That which

makes Peter's reforms so difficult to grasp is their simultaneousness; they seem to lack system and plan; everything is put in movement at the same time. One main idea can indeed be traced in every single act, and that is the increase of the country's wealth; all which does not directly aim at that is either a means or a necessary consequence. One of these means was war; it was an expensive process, but the compensations expected were greater than the sacrifices. The campaigns of Peter the Great have a character of their own. It is never for a diplomatic reason or through greed for adjacent territory that they are undertaken; we always find the practical aim at the end. They are not vast, the territories for which he fights—the port of Azov, as entrance to the Black sea, Derbent, on the Caspian, and the shores of the Baltic, the first of these being ceded back to Turkey after the campaign of 1711. And the process of war itself, how different it appears! It quite loses the character of a national calamity. Those healthy, vigorous regiments in newly-adopted foreign uniforms, taught by foreign under-officers, but led by Russian generals, are in search of a foeman worthy of their steel; a defeat is never a disaster; it is another lesson learned, and the profit of the lesson never fails to materialize.

The first campaign against Azov was gained by the Turks. With the energy of a man knowing where his fault lies and how to repair it, Peter rushes into the forests of Varonesh; twenty-six thousand carpenters are set to work, building a fleet, and the czar presides over them. Between November and the next spring

the task is accomplished; the vessels sent down the Don appear before Azov; the port is taken—the lesson has been of profit.

The first conflict with Charles XII, of Sweden, which opens the famous “Northern war,” brings the dreadful defeat of Narva with the loss of the whole artillery—another lesson. Everything is set on foot this time; men, women, monks, priests, work by order of the czar for the equipment and arming of the soldiers; new foundries work day and night; church bells are melted down; in sixteen months’ time three hundred guns are ready. The future field-marshal, Sheremetiev, takes command and marches from success to success; Swedish banners sent to Moscow wave in the Kremlin. Peter leaves for the North; with his new artillery he takes a fortress on the Neva, which, with that rage for German names which then invades the national vocabulary, he calls Schlüsselburg. With sixty cutters he rows down the Neva to explore the mouth of the river. Suddenly three Swedish men-of-war appear; there is a fight; the three vessels are captured; the first naval battle is gained, the dream of Peter’s forefathers is fulfilled.

Soon afterward Peter goes ashore; a few wooden houses are rapidly put together; he orders it to be a town, a seaport; he calls it St. Petersburg and leaves for the South; the Turkish frontier requires his presence. But the struggle with Sweden is not finished; another terrible but inevitable conflict had to come; it came on June 27, 1709, near Poltava; the “Northern war” had its culminating point in the southwest. The armies met at four in the morning; at eleven the

Swedes were crushed and put to flight; Charles XII, the Swedish hero, wounded and carried on a litter, just escaped captivity. When, a hundred years later, Napoleon I, with his arrogant belief in his star, shall ask the envoy of Alexander, "What is the shortest way to get to Moscow?" Balashov will answer with courtesy, "There are several ways, your Majesty; Charles XII chose the way of Poltava." From that day the curtain rises before Europe, and Russia enters the field of universal history. But Peter takes the matter from another side: "The opposing army," he writes, "had met the fate of Phaeton. To-day, definitely, a stone has been laid in St. Petersburg's foundation with the help of God." Always the practical end.

Industrial Activity.

Thus war was a means of learning and enriching; but there were also immediate measures directed to the increase of national wealth. Peter not only sets his people in movement, he wakes the soil of the country and shakes the slumbering earth; iron, coal, naphtha—all the natural resources—are simultaneously grasped at in different parts of the country, "in order," says one of his decrees, "that God's blessing should not remain useless under the earth." A system of canals is undertaken by which the Neva is united to the Volga, the Baltic to the Caspian; two hundred and fifty manufactures are established in a few years; privileges of all kinds are granted in order to further commercial enterprises and to allure foreign dealers; but that the

foreign element may not overbalance in the scale of national economy, Russian students are sent abroad; Russians learn from foreigners, but they always keep their rank; they are pupils, but not subordinates. Russian soldiers were trained by German and Swedish under-officers; but the battles in which the Swedes had been defeated were gained by Russian generals. The lad who began his practical education in the German suburb, dazzled by the superiority of Dutch and German carpenters, was an obedient pupil and an enraptured friend of the Swiss Lefort, the bankrupt merchant from Geneva, who related such wonderful stories about foreign countries, and of the Dutchman Timmerman, who was the first to show him the use of the astrolabe.

An Imperial Education.

But Peter goes abroad; he becomes himself a craftsman; he works in the docks of Saardam and Deptford, and when he returns home, with the superiority of a monarch who can with his own hands build a ship even to its slightest detail, his former friends, who had unbounded influence so long as they held his imagination, lose all importance. The sovereign who is so much accused by the so-called national party for his partiality for foreigners, leaves the state of affairs at his death exclusively in Russian hands. Russian students come back, and new schools are founded—always with the same practical purpose. Till this time schools had been a sort of appendix to monasteries; the

instruction given took no account of the exigencies of life; it was the same for everyone, and consisted, in addition to primitive notions of writing and reading, in moral teaching aiming at the salvation of the soul. "But I want schools," exclaims Peter impatiently, in a conversation with Patriarch Hadrian, "schools that shall prepare people for all necessities, for civil and military service, including the arts of building, of medicine." In all elementary schools, under the supervision of the provincial clergy, arithmetic and geometry were introduced. Then came a sort of high school, of the classical type, with Greek and Latin; others with mathematics, German, or French. Moreover, special technical schools were founded; in Moscow, a medical school attached to the hospital and a school of navigation; in St. Petersburg, a naval academy and an engineering school.

The Emperor Peter.

In 1722 the last act of the Northern war was accomplished; it was the peace of Neistadt, by which the whole southern littoral of the Baltic, from St. Petersburg down to the frontier of the Courland duchy and a part of Finland, were ceded to Russia. Peter the Great then made a triumphant entry into the young city which was not yet the capital, but already the favorite of the sovereign, who called it "my paradise." The senators and ministers were waiting with impatience for his return. On the 22d of October, in the Trinity church, in presence of the czar, the text

of the peace treaty was read to the people; and after the reading, Chancellor Golovkin, at the head of the Senate, advanced, and in the name of the country begged the tzar to accept the title of emperor and "father of the fatherland, for having brought us from non-existence into existence."

Such was the worker; such the work, pictured as they present themselves to posterity; but how did contemporaries accept them? When his immediate collaborators offered him the title of emperor there is evidence to show that they had a keen insight into the significance of events and a great power of syncretical appreciation. But the rest? The great majority hardly understood anything, and it must be admitted that much of the fault lay in the methods with which reforms were carried out, and, in some respects, even in the reforms themselves. The fact that no well-established programme was set before the people left the masses in the dark as to the aim of that which was going on under their eyes. The official gazette, published by Peter's orders, registered facts, spoke of methods, but maintained no system, insisted upon no plan. This absence of well understood purpose deprived the tzar's activity of all creative element. The people saw the destruction of the old order, but the new escaped their comprehension. The reform was practical, it aimed at material prosperity; but it was too practical, it was nothing but practical, and this was the germ of hindrance to its wide acceptance.

In the time of Peter only those few who were already educated, or who were endowed with extraordi-

nary natural gifts, could understand him, and these alone believed in him. The customs, opinions, creeds, of the people were hurt by every innovation. The compulsory shaving, the so-called "German dress," the new chronology beginning with Christ's birth instead of the creation of the world, the new year beginning in January instead of September, the compulsory participation of women in social gayeties—only education could reconcile people to such arbitrary changes; but education is a slow process.

It is easy for us at the beginning of the twentieth century to criticise what Peter the Great was doing at the beginning of the eighteenth. What could he do in the short space of a man's life? How was it possible to educate a grown-up generation? Instead of losing time in educating them, he ordered them to act as if they were educated people. Some obeyed, others grumbled, and there were those who, under simulated obedience, concealed active opposition. During his whole life Peter had to work under the constant threat of hostile elements, creeping out like reptiles from the clefts of the old edifice. And the darkest plot of reaction he found in his own family.

Treason of Alexis.

Alexis, the son of his first wife, Eudoxia Lopouhin, inherited from his mother a hatred of Peter's innovations. From the cell of the convent to which she had been relegated, she never ceased to instigate him; but he needed no instigating. He confesses to the priest

that he hates his father, and often wishes his father were dead. "God will forgive you," answers the priest; "we all wish the same thing." Terrible, tragic is the whisper of this double confession overheard by history. One day the father learns all.

Alexis flees; he is pursued, but he escapes. In Italy, at Naples, in sight of the beautiful bay, he spends his last hour of liberty. He is hunted down and brought back; a supreme court is appointed to judge him; he is condemned to death. "But the condemnation," adds the official history of the time, "could not be carried out, for on that night the tzarevich died in his prison.

Last Days of Peter the Great.

Moral torment and physical exertion had undermined Peter's health. Full-blooded and vigorous, of a preternatural strength, the great worker "abiding in labor" had to succumb to his own work. We have had a glimpse of this work, and have seen that feverish activity, the mere recital of which is enough to take away one's breath. But we cannot form a full idea of the whirlwind of Peter's life. He was always either leaving or returning; from Astrakhan to Archangel, from the Baltic to the Caucasus, he was in all corners of his land, and his continuous writing, his never-ceasing decrees, spreading through the country and penetrating through the slightest details of practical life, made him omnipresent at every hour of his reign. His absences were more terrible than his presence; for they preceded his return, and heaven knows what a return of

Peter the Great meant for his ministers and senators. When seeing him off on one of his campaigns the Senate asked him for his orders. "I told you not to sleep," he answered, "and I repeat, don't sleep, and once again, don't sleep." And all his life he was acting as if people were continually snoring around him; he was constantly wakening them and shaking them up. How did he find time amid this activity for verifying the translations of technical manuals which were being made by his order? He scolds a man for having translated too literally a German manual of fortification: "Enough, if you grasp the sense," he writes; "and then put it into our language, so that it may be read as intelligently as possible." During thirty-six years the whole country was in motion; toward the end people began to feel tired; a sort of relaxation followed Peter's death; the workers took rest, yet the work stood firm—it cannot perish—and this is perhaps the strongest evidence of the enormous proportions of his task, that he made it impossible for the country to turn back.

In November, 1725, Peter was yachting on the Neva, when he saw a boat which had just run aground; he hastened to save the people, spent the whole afternoon in the water, caught cold, and did not recover. In the rush of life he probably seldom thought of death; on his dying bed he asked for pen and paper. He began to write, but the hand obeyed no more. Of all he wrote only two words could be made out: "Give everything." In his funeral oration, Theophan Prokopovich, archbishop of Novgorod, one of the most ardent

adherents of the reform and its untiring commentator in the pulpit, uttered these memorable words: "Though he abandoned us through the destruction of the body, in departing he left us his spirit."

Russian Point of View.

National self-consciousness is a great helper to the observer; more than that, it is, perhaps, the only source from which he can get those elements of knowledge necessary for forming an adequate opinion of a nation. One may read as many foreign books as he pleases about a country; he will not know it, will know scarcely anything about it, until he has read its national books. How often are the Russians asked by foreigners: "Why do you know other nations and pretend that nobody knows you?" To this they exclaim: "Because you are more barbarous than we, whom you accuse of barbarism." But the difference comes from another cause. If Russia knows other nations, it is because she has learned their history from their books, whereas Russia's history was, until recent years, known to other countries only from foreign books. Above all, it is to Russian literature we must look for a true estimate of the national hero, as we take our leave of him.

Catherine the Great.

Whenever men speak of the intellectual or literary progress of Russia in the eighteenth century, they con-

fine themselves almost entirely to the reign of Catherine the Great. The splendor of this showy reign is not the only reason why the name of the empress seems to absorb the century. Peter the Great, standing on the threshold of two centuries, belongs chronologically to both; moreover, he does not embody a period, but marks an historical era. Figures like his root deeper and rise higher than their own time; they are not what is called representative, and it would be an error to apply to individuals who make their time the same term as to those who represent it. In spite of his helpers and contemporary admirers, Peter the Great belongs to some superior region, outside the beaten track of chronological succession; he is not an index of a century, just as an *aërolite* is no index of geological formation. Thus, in the memory of posterity, he does not monopolize the eighteenth century; he vacates it for his successors. Among these Catherine the Great has no competitors. Her personal talents, the superior qualities of her colleagues, the scale on which she carried on her diplomatic intercourse, a series of successes obtained by the Russian arms by land and sea—all this is enough to make her the central figure of the century.

Her Dual Personality.

The personality of Catherine the Great is of a dual nature—the empress as she was, and the empress as she wanted to be seen. No sovereign ever cared for public opinion as she did. All the resources of her intelligence, her literary talent, the means given by rank and

power, were employed by her for establishing the reputation that she desired to obtain. Her correspondence with Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert and other French celebrities, which displays more brightness and good humor than seriousness, was but seeking notoriety. In these spirited letters she was multiplying and spreading her moral portrait—as she would have it known—all over Europe. And, of course, such a portrait was pleasant to look upon. In the gorgeous frame of monarchical splendor, with beautiful parks and palaces in the purest Louis XV style in the background, surrounded with the fame of military exploits; the features of this bright and attractive woman aroused enthusiasm. She was praised abroad; she was exalted at home; she was celebrated in beautiful verses; and as such she was handed down to posterity. The brightness of this portrait throws its light on the whole environment, and communicates to Catherine's reign an exterior splendor that has seldom been surpassed. The empress had the rare fortune of impressing herself on people's minds just as she wanted to be seen. There were, no doubt, many deficiencies under all this dazzling splendor. But, after all, it is the empress as she wanted to be seen that interests us; for it was she who influenced the intellectual movement, who patronized literature, who impressed imaginations and who passed into poetry.

French Influence.

Under Catherine French philosophy pervaded Russian intellectual life, and in this the country underwent

the same influence as the rest of Europe. Frederick the Great welcomed Voltaire to Potsdam; the Academy of Berlin was presided over by Maupertuis; Catherine received Diderot at St. Petersburg, and entertained Grimm at Tsarskoye Selo. In Russia the movement was more exaggerated than elsewhere. Russian military schools were filled with French professors, and rich families engaged French teachers for their children, the empress setting the example. A close intercourse was established between St. Petersburg and Paris; no Russian travelled abroad without paying his respects to Voltaire. In his old age the philosopher was engaged to write the history of Peter the Great, very much to the disgust of Frederick, who exclaimed, when he saw the first volume: "Pray, what is this idea of writing the history of Siberian wolves and bears?"

Sad is the moral aspect which Russian society presents at this period, when people's heads were stuffed with shallow phrases about liberty, equality, fraternity. The inner link between the ideas proclaimed, and those events which gradually led to the great revolution escaped their observation. The empress herself did not at first understand; she continued her philosophical flirtations with the intellectual representatives of an epoch the mere remembrance of which would later make her shudder. Yet she was extremely far-sighted, and had a remarkably keen perception of cause and effect. In the autumn of 1789 she says that Louis XVI will share the end of Charles I. In her letters to Grimm in 1790 she predicts the appearance of a Cæsar in France. A sort of duality creates a contradiction between her

ideas and her acts. The Revolutionary war in America fills her with indignation, and yet she is sorely disappointed when Lafayette is compelled to decline her invitation to accompany her in a tour of the Crimea. On the other hand, Franklin expresses a wish to visit her, and she asks Grimm to dissuade the old man from so long a journey. "I don't like him," she says to her private secretary, Krapovitsky, who, between 1782 and 1793, kept a concise record of his conversations with the empress.

Jostled between love of popularity and dread of revolution, sovereigns like Frederick II, Joseph II and Catherine II, who represented what is called enlightened absolutism, were all double-faced at this time. No wonder that the empress as she wanted to be seen "invites Beaumarchais to bring over to St. Petersburg his *Figaro's Marriage*," which had just been interdicted at Paris, while the empress as she was falls ill and takes to her bed when she learns that the king of France has been executed.

Russian society also was double-faced at this time. Refined courtiers, who knew by heart Voltaire and Rousseau, did not seem to notice the contradiction between the teaching of books and actual life—the great principles proclaiming the rights of man on the one hand and the servitude of the peasants on the other. The translation of idea into action was as yet almost unknown in Russia. The empress, who in many respects stood above her environment, had made attempts, in the first years of her reign, at putting on a solid basis the question of the emancipation of the serfs; but she

had to give it up, for it was in conflict with the interests of those to whom she owed her throne.

Superficial Culture.

Russian culture, though very considerable in a quantitative sense, was at this time extremely superficial. People took only an abstract of philosophy, and one that was unfitted to the soil, a philosophy of brains and not a philosophy of life. It was only after the terrors of the Revolution, and perhaps still more after the invasion of Napoleon in 1812, that French philosophy was made responsible for historical events; and then ideas were exaggerated, those who professed French views being regarded as sympathizers with revolution. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century Voltaireanism was synonymous with apostasy, and a Voltairean was a man condemned to hell, whom good Christians must avoid. Yet they were not dangerous; for they were merely the survivors of a past which had become innocuous, and soon fell out of fashion. But their memory lived on, and the younger generation was already imbued with the doctrines of Romanticism when old ladies in the provinces were still crossing themselves at the name of Voltaire.

The poets of Catherine's period, however old-fashioned they may seem to us, have their historical importance, and, taken in their own contemporary atmosphere, present a brilliant appearance, well deserving of the fame with which their names were surrounded at the splendid court of the empress. No sovereign,

before or since, took more interest in literature and writers than did Catherine the Great. She was herself a writer of exceptional ability, and at a time when literary work did not constitute an independent career, the special attention granted to literature is of unusual significance.

Lomonosov.

Lomonosov had constituted himself the singer of Peter the Great, and with the pseudo-classical tone of his lyre, the official character thus given to poetry passes over to the next generation. The empress, with her encouraging smile, captivates the heart of the national muse, and becomes not only the centre of poets, but the chief object of their songs. Derjavine, the most brilliant among them, declares in one of his odes that he has no other ambition than to become illustrious through having celebrated her deeds:

I sang, I sing, and I will sing them.
A sun, a moon for coming ages,
Thy glorious image and thy name.
I will extol; I will exalt thee;
And through thee become immortal.

A sort of fellowship is established between the empress and the writers. In her comedies she herself sets the example of the satirical tone, and a number of satirical magazines appear. Von Viczin writes his famous dramas, plays by the empress and others are performed on the private stage of the Hermitage palace; a free and healthy laughter resounds at the court of a sover-

eign who used to declare that no great man ever lived who did not possess an inexhaustible fund of gayety. Thus the tendencies of the literature of the time are marked by Catherine herself, the pseudo-classic trumpet proclaiming her glory, and the caustic speech of sarcasm ridiculing the old generation and spurring on the new.

Derjavine.

Among the pseudo-classic group, the first place must unquestionably be assigned to Derjavine. As he claims for himself, he was the first who sang in a pleasing tone, who spoke of God in simplicity of heart, and told the truth to monarchs "smilingly." Compared with his predecessors he had much to recommend him. He condescended to leave those artificial heights where poetry had sought its vocabulary; he dwelt in a lower region than Lomonosov; yet, compared to the next generation, he is still in the clouds. It is not his fault, it is not the fault of literature. At this time all streams of intellectual life moved in artificial channels; intelligences walked on stilts and were actuated by the desire of living up to patterns, not of penetrating into the substance of things; a void separated intellectual interests from the interests of life. Derjavine made attempts at stepping over that vacuum by introducing into his solemn verse satirical strokes of everyday life. In some of his odes we behold the aspect of contemporary society; its luxury, its indolence, its roughness are represented with characteristic strokes, but they do not fill up the void, for they fail to communicate reality to his poetry.

"Derjavine's poetry," says Belinsky, "is a brilliant page in the history of Russian poetry; it is not yet poetry." Galakov, in his *History of Russian Literature*, declares that Derjavine's poems are "poetical annals of Catherine's reign," and this is probably their chief value. His sonorous language, animated with a real, practical breath, was just the instrument suited for the splendor of that court, for the glory of the victories in the Crimea and on the Danube, for the pomp of St. Petersburg society, the pride of the grandes and the military exploits of Suvorov, Roumiantsov and all those who formed what Poushkin called the "glorious brood of Catherine's eagles."

The Hermitage Theatre.

In the private theatre of the Hermitage palace, whose magnificent picture gallery was also started by Catherine, performances, perhaps unique in history, were taking place. On the stage the measures of the government, together with innovations in social life, were criticised and abused by old ladies deploring the good old time, by obscurantist adherents of the past, and by idle youths who would neither learn nor serve; in the hall, on the picturesque amphitheatre of marble seats, the brilliant court surrounding the empress was exulting and applauding. An old lady on the stage is exasperated at these new plays, where "people are portrayed and made fun of." "But why are such plays permitted?" exclaims her interlocutor. "Why, my dear man," says the old lady, "what if those who ought to

forbid them are interested more than any one else?" The empress had good reason to be interested more than any one else, for she was their author.

Portraits were presented on the stage, but they were raised to types and became portraits of customs, not of people; they belonged to literature, and sometimes to politics, but not to gossip. And they were sharply drawn; for Catherine had rare power of observation and knowledge of human nature. Few sovereigns knew their environment as she did. In that crowd of ministers, diplomatists, writers, scientists, which composed her court, she knew every single character. When in her letters she mentions any of them, her few strokes are always to the point; she knows the qualities and weaknesses of every one. Fond of men of talent, she lifted them out of the multitude, she helped their individualization and imposed them upon society. At her court, however numerous the crowd, she recognizes in each his moral physiognomy, his intellectual rank, and gives to each his nickname. They have all been divined, studied and labelled by the empress; she has a different way of talking, a different selection of wits, according to her interlocutor. Her brightness, her versatility, the extent of her knowledge, the inexhaustible gayety she possessed and infused into others can hardly be conceived even from her own letters. "When I used to part from the empress," says Grimm, "I often felt so electrified that for half the night I used to walk up and down in my room." And declares one of her critics, "her comedies are a brilliant tribute to the authority of thought and to the moral sovereignty of

literature." They were never tame or tiresome; and, if sparkling, they never stooped to offend. Her satire was inimitable; keen as a scimeter, it gave no pain in the wounding; and, indeed, its very flash was accompanied with a balm that possessed immediate healing virtue. Her dexterity in handling themes was excelled only by that in handling personages.

Catherine's Dramatic Works.

Though only one of her plays was a decided success, beyond the court circles, Catherine wrote fourteen comedies, in addition to nine opera texts, seven proverbs or short plays, and other writings not in dramatic form. In a letter to Voltaire she speaks of her dramatic works as being weak in plot and ill-sustained in intrigue, but as natural and true in their characterization. Nor is this eulogy, though it proceeds from the authoress herself, altogether undeserved. Any deficiencies that they may exhibit as works of art are more than atoned for by the liveliness and judgment with which the manners of her epoch are portrayed. "In the composition of my comedies," she writes to a literary friend, "I have taken all my conceptions of character exclusively from my own country, and thus, without quitting home, have found in it alone materials for satire sufficiently abundant for a pen far more practised than I can ever hope to wield." But thus adjuring the traditions of classicism, and by wisely confining the action of her comedies to her own age and land, she has increased, rather than diminished, their interest, and given us

sketches of Russian life in the eighteenth century which for fidelity and completeness will bear comparison with the best productions of Von Viezin.

⊙ Tempora.

The first published of the plays of Catherine II, *O Tempora*, bears on its title page the words, "Composed at Yaroslaff during the terrible visitation of the plague." It was written in 1772. The plot is extremely simple and turns on the love of Milksop for Christina, the granddaughter of Mrs. Devout, whose opposition to a poor match is only overcome by the clever, though rather stagy, manœuvres of Milksop's friend, Sharp. The merit of the piece is in the delineation of its leading characters; Mrs. Devout, Mrs. Marvel and Mrs. Prattle, their Russian names here replaced by English equivalents, explaining, after the manner of the old comedy, their peculiar foibles, hypocrisy, superstition and love of gossip. Mrs. Devout must be admired as the most exemplary of women by all those who believe religion to consist in outward ceremonies and who indulge in long prayers, thinking they shall be heard for their much speaking. "She keeps the fast days strictly, goes to church every morning, takes care to place a taper before the image of her saint on each festival, will not touch a piece of meat all Lent, wears woolen dresses—but, you must know, it is from stinginess—and hates most heartily all who do not observe her rules of life." Nothing but the miraculous will do for Mrs. Marvel, who is especially in-

dignant at the attempt made by modern thinkers to explain the government of the physical world by "laws of nature." "Just so," exclaims Mrs. Devout, as she makes the same complaint which theologians still repeat, "you believe in nothing now. Nature is all in all with you."

But the happiest hit is the adroit manner in which Mrs. Devout turns her long prayers to her own profit. Though of a good family, she is overwhelmed with debts, and accordingly, whenever a creditor is seen approaching, runs off to her private chapel, where, of course, she cannot be disturbed. Once, indeed, a well-timed bribe induced Martha, her maid, to proceed boldly into the chapel and announce the presence of the unwelcome guest, but her reception was not such as to justify a repetition of the rash experiment. "Thou godless imp," shrieked the religious lady, as she threw at Martha her heavily bound prayer-book, "couldst thou not choose a more fitting time? Must thou needs come, like Satan, to tempt me with earthly vanities when my thoughts are fixed on heavenly things and raised above the grovelling cares of this world?"

True to her mission as educational reformer, Catherine has made her comedy the vehicle of exposing the more prominent deficiencies in the then prevailing system of instruction. To teach a woman even the most elementary branches of learning was thought not only to be extravagant, but injurious. "What good is there," asks Mrs. Marvel, "in a girl knowing how to read and write? The less she knows, the less rubbish she will talk." And the worthy dame does not fail to

thank God that her mother made her promise never to take her pen or book in hand. It was against this stolid worship of ignorance that Russian writers of the eighteenth century had to strive, and any sameness that there may be in their satire must be attributed to the obstinacy with which the people clung to their old prejudices against "the new learning," and the reluctance with which they emerged from the dark ages of intellectual sloth.

Mrs. Grumble's Birthday.

But perhaps this ignorance, notwithstanding its grossness, was better than the fripperies which then passed current in the fashionable world for high breeding and good manners. In *Mrs. Grumble's Birthday*, written by Catherine in the same year as *O Tempora*, the affected habits and conversation of the educated classes are broadly caricatured. Olympia, who has just finished her schooling at an establishment where none but daughters of the best families are admitted, and Fierlyfyschoff—which may be translated Weathercock—a type of the dandy of the last century, speak a jargon of their own, half French, half Russian, the use of which has by no means disappeared even at the present day. In the fourth scene of the first act the latter pays a visit to Mrs. Grumble, and arriving late, according to his wont, expresses a fear to Priscilla, the pretty parlor maid, and Anthony, the lackey, that he has kept the dinner waiting. This gives opportunity for the carrying on of a very pretty dialogue:

Fierlyfyschoff.—I fear I am a little late. Mrs. Grumble is already at dinner.

Priscilla.—Not yet, but they are just going to sit down to table.

Fierl.—Truly, this house is admirably managed; one is never late. Admirable, ma foi, admirable. Come when you will, you are always in time.

Prisc.—But what makes you so late? Where have you been? It is not business, I fancy, that has kept you.

Fierl.—Belle demande. Where have I been? A ma toilette, à ma toilette. Where else could one have been at this early hour? Yesterday I lost, the whole night, at cards. Then I went me coucher at six o'clock après minuit, got up at one, and have now such a migraine that I can scarcely tell you how ill I feel. Have you any eau de Luce? I fear I shall fall—I am so weak—hold me up.

Prisc.—Had you not better sit down? Here is a chair.

Fierl.—Sit down there, and I so weak? At least, give me an easy chair.

Prisc.—Perhaps you would fancy a sofa, or shall I fetch a bed?

Fierl.—Ma foi! A good idea! Confoundedly stingy of madame not to have in each room at least one chaise longue. Can't die of fatigue here with anything like grace! Ah, mon Dieu, quel temps, quels gens!

Anthony.—How, die? Are you, then, really ill?

Prisc.—Perhaps you have been too much shaken in the carriage:

Ant.—So, it would be much better for you to ride on horseback.

Fierl.—(Falling back in his seat.) What, I? Mon Dieu! I—to ride on horseback! the mere sight of a man riding fills me with alarm and surprise. How can people hazard their lives and trust their necks to a beast? Cela est bien ignoble! For my part, even when in a carriage, I never let them drive me over a bridge, for fear of an accident, but get out and cross on foot.

Prisc.—I am only surprised that in this cold weather you venture out at all.

Fierl.—True, the climate is detestable, pour nous autres. But every night before going to bed I use the best French pomade. But (looking at Priscilla), ah, diable! ah, ah, ah! you, a young girl, intelligent, too, in the service of a lady, dressed in that vulgar way, ah, ah, ah! fi donc, a light cotton in this horrible weather!

Prisc.—Well, what do you find ridiculous in my dress? I wear what is given me. We are not aristocrats, and no one will give us credit; the tradesmen know well enough that we cannot afford such rich dresses as you nobles wear.

Fierl.—Ma foi, how naïve you are! Do you think, my little dove, I ever pay tradesmen? Never, mon cœur, never, on my honor. I never did pay, never do pay, and never shall pay. Enough for them if they have the honor of writing our names in their greasy books. D'ailleurs, it never has been the custom in our family to pay debts. My dear father never settled a debt in his life, and he lived to a good old age, and I, like a dutiful son, follow his example.

This frivolity and indifference to all the serious purposes of life, which resulted in many cases in a sullen discontent with the efforts made by the government to enlighten the people, is still more strongly exhibited in Mrs. Grumble herself. Foolish, vain and fickle, she believes any story, however absurd, provided only it be directed against the government. Two rakes are anxious to secure the hands of her daughters, Olympia and Christina, in order to repair their shattered fortunes. To win the good opinion of the mother, they are never at a loss in inventing some marvellous tale, designed to expose the nefarious character of the empress and her chief advisers. It is with this object they persuade her "that in a few months a law will be promulgated forbidding any marriage for a space of ten years." In despair, lest her daughters

should be left on her hands, she readily gives her consent and is only anxious that the wedding should take place without delay. Of course, after the manner of comedies, all ends happily. The cheat is discovered, and the daughters are united to a worthy pair, whose love, for five acts, has been thwarted in every possible way.

The other dramatic works of Catherine need not be noticed at length. One of them, entitled *A Pretty Basketful of Linen*, is a translation, or rather an adaptation, of Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The personages all bear Russian names, and our old friend Falstaff is transformed into Polcadoff, or Halftun. The aim of the piece is to satirize that inordinate love of everything French, which then, as now, so widely prevailed among the upper classes of Russian society. Like Polcadoff, they live more abroad than they do at home; but their experiences of foreign life are mostly confined to acquaintance with actresses of very doubtful repute, and the sole result of their travels is that they are able to introduce at all times and on all occasions into their conversation references to how things are managed "chez nous à Paris."

Rurick.

Nor is this the only play in which Catherine has taken Shakespeare for her guide. The tragedy of *Rurick*, as its title page informs us, is "modelled on the historical plays of Shakespeare without observing the ordinary rules of the classical drama." Critics have

pointed out how close a resemblance there is between the sentiments put in the mouth of Rurick and the maxims on education and government laid down by Catherine herself in the "Royal Instructions." The main purpose of the piece is to glorify Rurick, Russia's first grand-duke, to whom are ascribed all those virtues which were once supposed to be the inalienable attributes of kingship. Gostomysl, prince of Novgorod, feeling that his days were drawing to a close, and conscious of the perils that threaten the commonwealth, advises the elders of the people to choose Rurick, a Varangian chieftain, as his successor. This they do; but a few years later Vadim, the late prince's grandson, heads a revolt against the new ruler, by whom he is first conquered and then freely pardoned. But, spite of its wholesome morality, it must be confessed that the drama is dull; there is too much sermonizing and too little action, and the excellencies of the hero are enforced with such persistency and at such great length that we wish he had not been, on the stage at least, so faultless in character.

Catherine's Work.

In the discussion of Catherine's plays it must have been observed that her place in dramatic literature is one of eminence, rather because she dared to do than because of the manner of doing. Herself eminent, there would naturally be an attractiveness, as well as importance, about her works over and above their intrinsic merits. She doubtless felt this and acted upon

it. Seeking none the less to acquire and deserve literary distinction, striving nobly to disarm criticism, the real motive of her adventure must be sought, nevertheless, in the grand opportunity of place and time she found at her disposal. She knew thoroughly the need of her country for literary exaltation, how abject it was in its foreign imitations, how fruitless seemed the detached and spasmodic efforts of the mere individual writers. With an intuitive perception of real conditions, with a quick sympathy and popular instinct, with a national pride far deeper than throne or regal estate, she firmly grasped a desperate situation, and made herself such a part of it as to quite redeem it, or, at least, to set in active motion the forces needed for redemption. There was a daring, a sublimity, in her effort which merited the success that followed. Even if not a single play of her's had deserved survival, even if she had set no dramatic style, her people could not fail to hail that spirit of hardy determination which caused her, in their own behalf, to join with her mission of state that even higher and nobler mission of social and mental amelioration. Keeping this in view, the critic of Catherine's writings may safely overlook their defects and treat them as invaluable accessories of an ambition which gives her a grand historic footing.

III.

Von Viezin and Krilob.

The comedies of Von Viezin, like the satires of Kantemier, were mainly directed against ignorant admirers of the past, who obstinately clung to the life and customs of their forefathers, and resisted every change and reform simply because they were innovations. Especially directed against these false notions are the two great comedies of Von Viezin, the aim of which is to expose the vicious superficialities which too often formed the essence of Russian instruction.

Denis Ivanovitch Von Viezin, as his surname testifies, was of German origin, but his family had been settled in Russia from an early period. He was born in the year 1744, and, as a boy, entered the then newly opened Moscow gymnasium.

Education.

If we may believe the account Denis gives us of the gymnasium in his *Life Confessions*, he could not have learned very much while there. The mathematical master drank himself to death, and the Latin tutor

seldom or never made his appearance. "On the day before the examination, our Latin master came, after an absence of several months, wearing a coat on which there were five, and a waistcoat with four large brass buttons. A little surprised at his strange costume, I asked why he dressed so queerly. 'My buttons seem to you ridiculous,' he answered, 'but they will prove your salvation and also prove my reputation; for the buttons on the coat represent the five declensions, and those on the waistcoat the four conjugations. So,' he continued, striking the table with his hand, 'please listen to what I say. When to-morrow you are asked what declension any substantive is, notice which of my coat buttons I touch. If, for example, it is the second from the top, answer boldly the second declension. And if they bother you about the verbs, keep your eye sharp on my waistcoat and you will make no mistakes.' " Owing to this ingenious forethought on the part of the master, all went off satisfactorily. But a like success did not attend the next day's examination in geography, every kind of an answer but the right one being given about the sources of the Volga, Van Viezin frankly replying that he did not know. This outspoken confession of ignorance apparently pleased the examiners; for he obtained the gold medal, and in 1758 was elected to a crown exhibition, and studied for the next two years at St. Petersburg.

During his residence in the capital Denis made the acquaintance of Lomonosov, and also for the first time in his life visited a theatre. "It would be difficult," he writes, "to describe the impression which this perform-

ance produced on me; and though the comedy I saw was terribly stupid, I then regarded it as a work of the highest art, and nearly went mad with joy when I learned that some of the actors were in the habit of visiting the house of my uncle, with whom I lived." It was thus that he became friendly with Volkoff and some of the other actors. On his return to Moscow he translated several Latin and French books, among which may be mentioned Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Voltaire's *Alzire*. His qualities for the task of translation, it must be confessed, were not of the highest, and the critics were not slow to amuse themselves with his blunders, as where he confuses "sabre" and "sable," and translated it by a Russian word equivalent to "sand."

Literary Career.

Having completed his university career, Von Viezin entered the Foreign Office, and employed his leisure time in the composition of his first comedy, *The Brigadier*, which was produced with great success in 1766. A few years later he married Mme. Khlopova, a rich widow; but the union brought him little happiness, though his wife's fortune enabled him to travel abroad. In his letters written from Paris to his sister and to Count Panin he has described the impressions of his journey; but they are characterised by a strange narrowness of view, and men like Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot are judged with an assurance of superiority as amusing as it is ill-placed. During the interval between his first and second visits to France he wrote *The Minor*,

which achieved even a greater success than his earlier comedy. It was in reference to this play that Potemkin employed the celebrated phrase, "Die, Denis, or write no more comedies." His later productions are both deficient in humor and weak in construction.

Last Years.

During the latter years of his life Von Viezin suffered from a paralytic stroke, with which he was seized in 1785, and which deprived him of the free use of his tongue and left side. His physical sufferings tended to strengthen his natural disposition to devotism; and a story is told of his addressing the students of Moscow university in these words: "Children, let it be a warning to you; I am punished for my free thinking. Do not offend God in either word or thought." Some of his biographers have been pleased to draw an edifying moral from this story; but there is something sad and piteous in the spectacle of the old decrepit comedian ignoring the healthier teaching of his earlier years, and so far overcome by bodily pain and weakness as to condemn the use of that reason for the full and free cultivation of which it had once been his mission to plead. He died at St. Petersburg in 1792, his last comedy being *The Choice of a Tutor*.

Brigadier.

Von Viezin's *Brigadier*, though weak in plot and faulty in construction, is the earliest comedy of Russian

life. The characters are symmetrically arranged in two opposing groups, like the black and white pieces on a chess-board. The catastrophe is not led up to, nor does the play possess that unity of action which is necessary to retain our interest in its leading incidents. The personages come on, and go off the stage at the will of the writer, but neither their entrances nor their exits contribute in any way to the development of the action. There is, in truth, no close connection between the fundamental idea and the story of the piece. Sophia, the daughter of a counsellor of state, is hindered from conferring her hand on Godlove, the object of her affection, by the opposition of her parents, who are bent on marrying her to Ivan, the son of a brigadier. The timely discovery of a close intimacy that has long existed between Ivan and the mother of Sophia releases the heroine from the necessity of sacrificing her happiness to the caprices of her parents, and true love, as it ever should be, is crowned with victory.

But the plot of the comedy is too insignificant and of too light a construction to support the idea of which it is intended to be the exponent. The moral occupies too prominent a place, and, instead of being freely developed from the conduct of the principal personages, overrides the whole action of the piece. There is an unwholesome amount of preaching, and the sententious utterances of Godlove and Sophia merely express the opinions of the author. They might be entirely struck out of the play without doing any injury whatever to the movement and development of its plot. Their lessons should have been taught in action and not put into

the form of aphorisms. Von Viezin has not given a picture of life, but rather a satirical exposure of contemporary ignorance and immorality.

The Minor.

In *The Minor* we have a sketch of the provinces in Russia, such as they were in the eighteenth century, drawn with great vivacity and humor. The names of many of its characters have long been popularly adopted as typical appellations. Noble children, in spite of numerous enactments which peremptorily deprived them of the right to serve in any military or civil department of the empire, unless they first passed a satisfactory examination, were then brought up in ignorance. All serious instruction was considered to be unfitting their high rank; and if they learned anything it was because, like the mother of Metrophanes, their parents had been told that a little knowledge would be useful to their children when they came to serve, and that, of late, officials had begun to regard those of their subordinates who knew nothing as "fools and incumbrances." Accordingly, persons occupying a menial position on the estate, and who were not too proud to be ordered about, were entrusted with their education; the pupils were allowed to learn just as little as they chose; and, to quote the words of one of the characters in the play, "after fifteen years of such training, instead of one boor you had two, the old tutor and the young squire."

At the moment when we first make the acquaintance of Metrophanes he is suffering from a severe fit of in-

digestion, brought on by overfeeding the night before. In reply to his mother's anxious inquiries as to what ails him, the artless youth informs her that, during the night, he had seen most frightful figures in a dream.

Mrs. Booby.—And what horrid figures, dear Metrophanes?

Metrophanes.—Why, you, mother, and father, there.

Mrs. Booby.—Why, how was that?

Metroph.—I had scarcely fallen asleep when I thought I saw you, mamma, walloping papa.

Mrs. Booby.—(Aside.) Ah, heavens! the dream told him true.

Metroph.—And I awoke, crying for pity.

Mrs. Booby.—Pity, and for whom, pray?

Metroph.—For you, mamma; you were so tired with beating papa.

Mrs. Booby.—Embrace me, darling of my heart; you are my true son, my only joy.

The education of this hopeful has been such as we might expect from the knowledge and position of his tutors—Cipher, a disbanded soldier, and Cheek, who had formerly been a coachman at Moscow, but, having lost his place through drunkenness, had migrated into the country and set up in the teaching line. Metrophanes has learned, thanks to the care of these worthies, “all the sciences,” as his mother fondly assures Mr. Equity, when that gentleman proposes to examine her son; and if he proves to be rather ignorant in geography, she consoles herself with the thought that it is not necessary for noblemen to know where places are, since “that is the duty of their coachman.” And, in truth, why all this bother about education? The history of her own family has taught her that people “can and do

live without learning. My deceased father was fifteen years captain in the army and died a captain; and though he could neither read nor write, he still contrived to lay aside a good sum of money." She is therefore not only ignorant, but vain of her ignorance; and conceited stupidity has never been more humorously sketched than in the scene where, disbelieving her ward's protestation that a letter she has just received came from her uncle, and suspecting it has been written by some lover, she is asked to read it for herself, she replies: "I read it? No, miss, I thank God that I have not been brought up like yourself. I can receive a letter, but I have inferiors to read it;" whereupon she turns to her husband and orders him to spell out the mysterious missive. In her bearing to such creatures as her husband, as to all whom she counts beneath her, and particularly to her servants, she is harsh and heartless, and regards it as an impertinence should any of her menials fall ill, and for that reason claim a temporary exemption from work.

Mrs. Booby.—Where is Paulina?

Eremievna.—Caught the fever, madam; obliged to keep her bed since morning.

Mrs. Booby.—Keep her bed, the beast! Keep her bed! As if she were a born lady!

Eremievna.—She is in a burning heat, madam; wanders in her talk and is quite delirious.

Mrs. Booby.—Wanders in her talk! delirious, the beast! Wanders in her talk, delirious! Just as if she were a born lady!

A woman of her character is not likely to allow poor Sophia, the ward entrusted to her care, to have her

own way, and disposes of her hand to a certain Mr. Brute, without for one moment imagining that her commands will be called into question. Brute's father, like Dryden's MacFlecknoe, "was blest with issue of large increase," and the family is so prolific that the race is never likely to die out. His son is brutal and boorish by nature, sunk to a level with the animals in his fields, and utterly deprived of every feeling, unless it be a doting partiality for pigs. And if he allows himself to be entrapped as a suitor for Mrs. Booby's ward, it is not the beauty and virtues of Sophia that attract him, for he has neither sufficient wit nor intelligence to recognise them, but the thought that, by marrying her, he will become master of her estate, which is renowned for its rare and rich breed of swine.

Mrs. Booby.—But, does the girl really please you so much?

Brute.—No, it is not the girl I care for.

Mrs. Booby.—How is it, then? Is it because her estate joins yours?

Brute.—No; it is not the estate, either; it is for what the estate breeds, and for which I have an unconquerable passion.

Mrs. Booby.—And, pray, what is that, my friend?

Brute.—I love swine, madam; and in this district, believe me, there are swine so fat and large that you won't find one of them that is not taller than any of us, when it stands upon its hind legs.

Throughout the whole comedy the character of Mrs. Booby is so artistically drawn that in its delineation Von Viezin ceases to be the mere satirist that he generally is, nor do we remark in it those exaggerations, ill-placed witticisms and imperfect conception of human nature, which too frequently disfigure his portraits.

However repulsive the woman may be, we can never cease to be interested in her; and we are not sure that, when, through the interference of Equity as commissioner from the government, the entire household is put under the tutelage of the crown, we do not pity the deposed tyrant, whom the veriest slaves that had hitherto trembled at her lightest word, now mock and jeer in the hour of her shame and defeat. We feel for the mother, as she turns to Metrophanes—the darling whom she has fondled and in whom she has trusted to find a refuge from her bitter humiliation—with the yearning cry, “You alone remain to me, my heart’s joy, my own Metrophanes,” only to be repulsed with the petulant remonstrance, “O, let me alone, mother, and have done with that hugging!” And this is the end of all her foolish idolatry; the one object of her affection, the only being that has ever touched her heart and aroused within her the better feelings of her nature, throws her off, now that she can no longer pamper his selfishness and satisfy his every caprice. The base sordidness of the creature she has made her god is revealed; the poor woman sees how terribly she has been deceived; and, conscious that there is none in the whole world to whom she can cling, or who will show her the least bit of pity or love, she falls broken-hearted and senseless to the ground.

In the comedies, as, indeed, in all the writings of Von Viezin, we perceive the high and lofty aim with which their author was inspired. Their very defects only serve to bring out still more distinctly their purpose and intention. The speeches of the serious char-

acters in the play appear to us to be dull and commonplace, as in reality they generally are; but these sententious utterances, though they have become the truisms of a later age, possessed a novelty of meaning when these comedies were written. They interpret and reflect the aspirations of the better spirits of the age, who, instead of fostering the material interests of the empire, sought to inculcate those principles of truth, justice and mutual tolerance, by the practice of which the happiness and dignity of citizens could be insured. It is for this reason that, even if their literary value were much less than it really is, the comedies of Von Viezin would still deserve the favor that has been accorded them, inasmuch as they form landmarks in the history of Russian social reforms.

By the writings of Kantemier and Von Viezin, by Karamsin's *Letters of a Russian Traveller* and Jukovsky's numerous adaptations from the poets of Germany and England, the literature of Russia was greatly enlarged and effectually relieved from the subservience to the pseudo-classicists of France which characterised its earlier stages. But for its full development it was necessary that it should be made free from all foreign tutelage and become, through the employment of the common, ordinary language of the people, the exponent of national faith, habits and traditions. This, the last and most difficult step in its progress toward self-dependence, was made by Krilov, who of all Russian writers is, perhaps, the best-known to foreign readers, owing to the admirable translations of his *Fables*, published in French by Bougeault and in Eng-

lish by Ralston, and read with delight among all classes wherever they have been produced.

Krillov's Youth.

Ivan Andreevitch Krilov was born at Moscow in 1768, or perhaps 1764. His first years were passed at Orenberg, where his father was engaged in active service against Pougatcheff and his partisans; but when the rebellion was completely crushed the family removed to Tver, where they resided till the death of his father, in 1780. Though completely illiterate herself, his mother took care that her son should receive such education as the provincial town to which the family removed could afford, and the boy's love for reading supplied the defects of his school instruction. Many of his leisure hours, we are told, were passed in strolling about the markets and wharves of the town, on his return from which he would amuse his comrades and friends by relating, in the genuine idiomatic language of the people, some of the humorous scenes he had witnessed; and these pastimes may be regarded as the original source of that nationality in style and diction which he afterward displayed in his sketches of popular life.

Drama and Journalism.

The death of her husband caused Krilov's mother to remove with her son to St. Petersburg, where, after many rebuffs, he succeeded in inducing a publisher to print a comic opera, which he had written during his

residence at Tver. This, his first literary production, was soon followed by two tragedies, *Philomel* and *Cleopatra*, but none of the three met with success, nor did they deserve it; for the opera was dull, and the tragedies are written in that false, declamatory style which Krilov himself, some years later, sharply ridiculed in his burlesque-drama *Prince Trumps*. In 1788 Krilov's mother died, and obliged, from the scantiness of his income, to seek some profession, he resolved to devote himself exclusively to the theatre and to journalism. But neither his journals nor his comedies brought him much profit, the list of subscribers to the former never exceeding two hundred names.

It was probably his ill success as a journalist and dramatist that induced Krilov, in 1797, to accept the appointment of Russian tutor to the children of Prince Galitzin. The prince, once a special favorite with the emperor Paul, had fallen into disgrace for having presumed to speak disrespectfully of a certain courtesan and was ordered to live, during his royal master's pleasure, on his estate in the government of Kiev. It was here that his biographer Wiegel, then a boy, first became acquainted with Krilov, of whose strange, rough manners and disposition he has given us a very faithful, if not a flattering description. "In his gait and conduct," he tells us, "in his figure and corpulence, as well as in his speech, there was something bearish: he was then more active than in later years, but even at that time he was noted for his indolence, untidiness and gluttony. But in spite of his uncouthness he was richly endowed with nearly every talent and capacity.

and was already a fair poet, an excellent musician and a good mathematician. Although so lethargic by nature, he was perfect as a tutor. Our lessons were almost entirely of a conversational character; he possessed the faculty of awakening the curiosity of his pupils, encouraged them to ask questions and answered them in that clear, homely, idiomatic language which he employed in his fables; and I must confess that I owe a large portion of whatever knowledge I possess to his wise system of tuition."

A Writer of Fables.

After the coronation of Alexander I, Prince Galitzin was allowed to return to the capital, and being appointed military governor of one of the Baltic provinces, offered Krilov a place in his chancery; but the man of letters soon tired of it and returned to St. Petersburg. He wrote a few more pieces for the theatre, one of which, *The Fashionable Lady*, achieved considerable success; but having shown two or three of his fables to his friend Demetrieff, and receiving his warm approval, he was induced to write more, and in 1809 a small volume, containing twenty-three fables, was published. The first was the *Oak and the Reed*, a translation of La Fontaine's *Le Chêne et le Roseau*, but to each edition fresh stories were added, the last, published during his lifetime in 1843, containing 198 fables. Of these, only thirty-seven were translated or adapted from foreign authors, the remainder being entirely of his own invention. Most of them were written

between 1806 and 1818, after which Krilov wrote but little and rarely. When asked on one occasion by a lady why he composed so little, he replied: "I would much rather that people grumbled because I do not write than that they should ask why I go on writing."

In 1812 he was appointed one of the assistants in the imperial public library, a post which he held for nearly twenty years. "From this period," writes Pletneff in his interesting biography of Krilov, "began a new era in the life of our poet, and up to 1841, the year in which he resigned his office, he led an easy, quiet, monotonous kind of existence, making no change in his daily habits, literary occupations or even in his lodging. Except when he went to the library, where his duties were extremely light and easy, or to dine at the English club and play at cards, or oftener doze over a newspaper, he rarely quitted home, and took no share in active public life. From mere ennui he now and then wrote a new fable, but spent most of his leisure hours in reading trumpery romances, generally old ones, and these he read, not for the sake of obtaining any new ideas, but simply to kill time."

The services which Krilov had rendered to the literature of his country were not forgotten, though he lived thus secluded from the world; for with that kindly generosity which has always distinguished the relations between the government of Russia and her chief literary men, care was taken that the last years of his life should be passed in competence and ease. Not only was he allowed to keep his salary after he had resigned his post as librarian, but a pension on

an unusually liberal scale was granted him. When some ill-disposed persons made the tzar acquainted with Krilov's unfortunate passion for gambling, Nicholas significantly replied: "I do not care about Krilov wasting the money given him, but I should be very sorry were he to waste the talents with which God has endowed him." He died in 1844, aged eighty.

"Krilov was born to us only in his fortieth year," writes Pletneff, wishing us to understand that it was not till he commenced writing fables that he discovered his real and true vocation. But the criticism can only be accepted in part; nor is it just to make such a distinction between his earlier and later literary labors. Krilov was a fabulist even before he composed his first fable. Many of his satirical papers, published in the three journals which he edited, are really apologues in form, directed against the same vices and failings which in his fables he afterward attacked in a similar spirit, though in a more artistic and finished style. There is, consequently, an intimate connection between these two periods of his career, and Krilov, when he listened to the advice of his friend, Demetrieveff, and resolved to write henceforth nothing but fables, did not abandon his old sphere for a new one, but continued the career of satirist, which he had already adopted, as being most natural to his genius.

Story of Cahib.

The happiest and most amusing of Krilov's satirical papers are, perhaps, his *Story of Cahib* and his *Pane-*

gyric in Memory of My Grandfather. Cahib was a mighty sovereign and, of course, renowned for his wisdom, though "he never read or consulted a book, since books are seldom written by caliphs," and it would have been beneath his dignity to learn from any of lower rank than himself. He patronized literature and science, but in a judicious way; for, by occasionally hanging a few of the learned men of his country, he took care that their number should never become dangerously great: "since they are like candles; let a moderate number burn, and a pleasant light is provided; but have too many, and there is danger of fire." His palace was furnished with every luxury, and among other curiosities could boast of a small but unique collection of apes, which had been trained to bow and grimace with such elegance that many of the nobility, in their eagerness to learn graceful manners, did their best to imitate these clever animals, and succeeded so well that it was difficult to say which made the best courtiers, they or the apes.

Naturally, Cahib had his paid poets, who never failed to turn their verses to good account. One of them, indeed, once wrote a glowing ode in honor of a certain vizier, but when he came to pay his poetical tribute of homage, was informed that the minister had been beheaded early that morning, whereupon he immediately changed the title and dedicated it to his late patron's enemy and successor; "for odes," as he slyly remarked to a friend, "are like silk stockings, and can be stretched to fit any foot."

In every respect Cahib was the happiest of rulers,

and no sovereign could boast of ministers more devoted or less disposed to question the wisdom of his decisions, or contravene any of his fancies or caprices. And the means with which he contrived to surround himself with such pliant and faithful servants were as simple as they were effectual. He did not fail to assemble them on stated occasions in solemn council, and invariably commenced their deliberations by informing them what line of policy he wished to pursue, and then solicited their advice by addressing them in a speech to the following purport: "Gentlemen, if any one of you desires to express his views on the matter, he is at liberty to speak freely and without restraint, having first received fifty stripes, after which we shall be most happy to listen to what he has to say." In this way the wise Cahib escaped an immense amount of palaver, secured the unanimity of his ministers and never experienced the annoyance of hearing opinions that were contrary to his own.

In the *Panegyric in Memory of My Grandfather* Krilov gives us a sketch of a noble squire, such as he was in the days when he reigned supreme on his estate, and there was no one to question or dispute his authority. If one were to visit his estate, and see the hungry faces of the peasants huddled together in their filthy hovels, he might be tempted to imagine there was famine in the country, and that for "miles round it would be impossible to find a crust of bread or a consumptive fowl;" but all fears of being starved would be dispelled the first time he sat down to table and observed how it was loaded with the most abundant

and sumptuous fare. The grandfather could boast of a long line of noble ancestors, who, indeed, in various ways made themselves so illustrious "that it was quite superfluous on his part, or for a whole generation of descendants, to trouble themselves with doing anything for their country." When a child his father gave him a spaniel, and the young noble began to amuse himself by pinching its ears, on which the animal turned round and bit his hand. "My dear child," remonstrated the father, when the boy ran to him shrieking, "have you, then, so few serfs under you? You can pinch, scratch or bite them with impunity, but dogs are such stupid brutes that they will not be hurt without biting in revenge."

Letters from Below.

The *Letters From Below* consist of a series of epistles received by the wise magician Malicoulmuk from certain friendly gnomes, and refer principally to the sad disorders that had arisen in the kingdom of Pluto, through the ill-advised introduction of French manners and fashions by the light-minded Proserpine. The satire is, for the most part, against the education then generally given to children of the nobility, which imparted to them the bare superficialities of European civilization, and not only failed to make them enlightened members of society, but deprived them of all the better traits in the Russian national character. A contempt of their own country, a disregard for its customs, a neglect of its language, a feverish pursuit of the

vainest and emptiest of pleasures and a misconception of the responsibilities imposed upon them by their birth and position were the miserable results of the education they received at the hands of foreign adventurers, who then, as now, too often filled the place of teachers, and whose antecedents perhaps qualified them to fulfill the duties of grooms and lackeys, but rendered them altogether unfit for tutors.

Moral Teachings and Style.

The larger number of Krilov's fables are directed against the ordinary failings of mankind, as selfishness, envy and intemperance. The moral lessons they teach are set forth without pedantry, and instead of aping an ideal beyond the reach of ordinary men, his estimate of good and evil is invariably based on the common-sense standard of the individual and the general utility of a virtuous and temperate life. The easy, familiar language in which they are couched is one of their greatest charms; the most popular and idiomatic diction is constantly used, and it is very seldom that any attempt is made at what is called fine writing. His success was as rapid as it has been enduring. The Academy of Sciences admitted him to membership, and bestowed on him the same gold medal that was accorded to Karamzin. In 1838 a great festival was held to celebrate the jubilee of his first appearance as an author. Before his death about 77,000 copies of his *Fables* had been sold in Russia, and numerous translations made.

IV.

Pushkin.

Alexander Sergeivitch Pushkin, the most celebrated of all Russian poets, was born in Moscow on May 26th, 1799. In more than one poem Pushkin expressed his pride at being able to count among his ancestors men of high repute in the history of his country. Perhaps the most celebrated of them was Gabriel Gregorovitch Pushkin, who espoused the cause of Demetrius the Pretender, and accordingly plays an important part in the poet's historical tragedy, *Boris Godunoff*. His mother, Nadejda, a woman of rare intellectual attainments, was the granddaughter of Abraham Petrovitch Hannibal, a favorite negro enrolled by Peter the Great.

Pushkin's father had adopted a military career while young, but had no particular liking for the service and often absented himself from duty for the more agreeable society of some reigning St. Petersburg beauty. His handsome person, easy manners, and lively conversation made him a universal favorite. His indifference to the requirements of military order finally led to his retirement from the service.

Alexander's boyhood was spent at Zacharino, a village lying south of Moscow, and intimately connected

with the history of Boris Godunoff. Timid to a fault, and little disposed to games requiring activity, he found his greatest pleasure in reading in his father's library. His education was of a kind which prevailed among the wealthier classes of Russian society. French was the language constantly spoken in the family, and it was with French literature that he first became acquainted. He was particularly fond of Molière, and being endowed with an excellent memory learned many of his comedies. The perusal of La Fontaine induced him to write a series of fables, and the *Henriade* of Voltaire suggested a poem in six cantos. But his imitation of the *Henriade*, entitled *La Tolyade*, from its hero, is rather a mock heroic, describing in light and easy verse a civil war, supposed to be waged between different dwarf tribes in the time of Dagobert. By his uncle Vassily's advice the tyro commenced studying Russian literature, his taste for which was greatly strengthened by hearing Karamsin read some of his stories and Dmitrieff repeat some of his fables. These writers, and also the poets, Jukovsky and Batushkoff, were frequent visitors at his father's house; and Alexander was an attentive listener to their conversation. In one of the class-rooms he constructed a kind of movable stage, on which he would perform original comedies, being himself author and actor, while his sister Olga was the audience.

Education.

As might be expected, the time devoted to his theatre considerably interfered with the proper occupations of

the school-room, although the best tutors were engaged to superintend his education. Next to his sister, for whom he ever entertained the warmest love, and to whom the first of his poetical compositions, written when he was fifteen years old, was dedicated, Pushkin's best friend was his aged nurse Irene. Born on the family estate, she remained in their service until death, and more than once refused to accept the freedom offered in recognition of her fidelity. To the last she watched over her child, as she liked to call him, with kindly forbearance toward his wild follies. "I have had a mass said for your health," she writes on one occasion; "live, my darling, a good life, and never do anything to make you ashamed of yourself." Innumerable were the popular stories she could tell him, and Pushkin was indebted to her for his first acquaintance with the national songs and traditions of his country. She enabled him to support, with something like indifference, the weariness of his banishment from St. Petersburg in 1825, as, during the dull winter evenings, she related to him cherished stories, which Pushkin afterward put into verse. To her also he read his principal poems before submitting them to public judgment. "Let other poets read to whom they will their compositions," he writes in his *Evjenie Onegin*, "I will read the fruits of my fancy and meditation to none save my nurse, the darling of my youth."

In 1811 an imperial lyceum was opened at Tsarskoe Selo, about twenty miles from St. Petersburg, and an intimate friend of the Pushkins was appointed its first director. The number of pupils was limited to thirty, and each candidate was required to pass an entrance ex-

amination in religion, four modern languages, of which English was one, and the sciences. Pushkin entered the new college, but he was not more industrious at this school than he had been at home. So lax was the discipline that one of the professors used to give up his room to his favorite pupils, who would assemble there at night, and to "the clinking of glasses and beer tankards, sing love songs and recite ribald poems." But however unsatisfactory his progress in learning, the years Pushkin spent at the lyceum were happy ones. His early shyness had departed, and his ready wit and alacrity for mischief rendered him popular among his school-fellows. The nickname of M. French was given him for his irritable and fiery temperament, so different from the easy phlegmatic disposition of the typical Russian, which, throughout his life, betrayed his semi-African origin.

Pushkin and his friend, Delvig, to whom he was warmly attached, became the acknowledged chiefs in the literary circles of the lyceum students, established a manuscript journal called the *Lyceum Sage*, and were the chief contributors to its pages. Pushkin now turned his attention to the literature of Germany, but so little did his genial nature sympathize with the gloomy mysticism of Klopstock that his taste for French reading was the more confirmed. It was not until 1814 that he wrote, as his first composition in Russian, some verses addressed to his sister. They were not printed until after his death, but in the July number for the same year of the *Russian Messenger* appeared Pushkin's earliest published piece, "To a Friend Poet." From

that time his contributions to Russian journals were frequent. Owing to their graceful style and natural feeling they attracted attention, and Pushkin was encouraged to cultivate his poetical talents.

Derjavine's Blessing.

Years later, when Pushkin's fame was fully established, he was not slow to acknowledge the spur which the praise of Derjavine had given to the development of his genius. Prince Serge Wolkonsky thus tells the story of their meeting: "One day in 1815, in the lyceum of Tsarskoe Selo, great excitement reigned among the pupils. Old Derjavine was coming to assist at the examination. At the appointed time the venerable poet made his appearance, white-haired and bent under his seventy-two years. He nearly slept from weakness until the examination in Russian literature began; then he was wide awake. The pupils were declaiming his poems; his eyes became bright, his face was illuminated, he was transfigured. A youth steps forth with curly hair, thick lips, and eyes like living coals. He is introduced as a young poet, and is asked to recite some of his verses.

" 'I told my reminiscences,' he writes later, 'standing within two paces from Derjavine. I cannot describe the state of my soul when I came to the verse where I mention Derjavine's name. My boyish voice resounded, my heart was beating in wild ecstasy. I do not remember how I finished or where I fled. Derjavine was transported; he called for me and wanted to embrace me.'

“‘My time has come to an end,’ said the great poet a few days afterward; ‘another Derjavine shall reveal himself to the world, one who on the school-bench has surpassed all other poets.’ Before he descended to the grave he gave the boy his blessing, and thus did Alexander Pushkin enter on his career”—a brief one, to be sure, but full of splendor.

Rouslan and Ludmiela.

The publication, in 1820, of *Rouslan and Ludmiela*, Pushkin's first poem of any considerable length, provoked a literary controversy of great intensity and bitterness. The reading public of Russia became divided into two hostile camps, and it would be difficult to determine which side displayed the greater zeal. The admirers of past traditions were, like Dmitrieff, offended at the poet's selection of a fantastic story, such as the mysterious disappearance of Vladimir's daughter on the night of her marriage with the brave Rouslan, and condemned as low and unbecoming poetic dignity the employment of such expressions as “our glorious Russian bath” or “tickling his nostrils with a spear.” But the novelty of the form of the poem; its light, easy, half earnest, half mocking style; the youthful enthusiasm thrown over its brilliant episodic descriptions; the happy, if incongruous, medley of the thoughts and diction of heathen days with the ideas and conceptions of our own age; and above all, the thoroughly national tone of the narrative ensured it a hearty welcome at the hands of those who were indifferent to the judgment

of learned critics, but felt instinctively that the poem, to use Pushkin's own expression, "breathes of Russia."

At the time when Pushkin commenced his literary career it was a dangerous thing for authors to obtain celebrity of any kind; they were expected never to transgress the limits of a harmless mediocrity. The censorship, which at the best is an insult and a sore hindrance to literature, was then exercised with a harshness and caprice that rendered it impossible for the most cautious writer to escape for any length of time its interdiction.

But Pushkin was by temperament unfitted to practice that cunning prudence which enabled the wary to veil their attacks on the corruptions and shortcomings of the governing classes; and the vicious surroundings of a despotic court were frequently exposed by him in some sparkling epigram with a sharpness that provoked powerful and dangerous enemies in high places. His trenchant verses on the detestable Arakchaeff; his ostentatious eulogy of Louval, the murderer of De Berri; his passionate *Ode to Liberty*, in which he anathematizes "the sworn assassins of freedom;" his bold asseveration in the *Epistle to Aristarchus* that, "in the sphere of intellect no concession shall be made to ignorant censors;" his witty *Christmas Tale*, where he represents the Tzar as blessing his people and bidding them rejoice, "because I have eaten, drunk, and dined well, and am fat, healthy, and full;" these and like effusions, though never printed, were circulated in manuscript from hand to hand, and obtained a popularity far greater than they would ever have enjoyed but for the

fact of their being strictly forbidden. But some of these obnoxious poems found their way to the palace, and in consequence the young revolutionist was banished to one of the southern governments of Russia.

Exile.

On May 5th, 1820, Pushkin quitted St. Petersburg for Kischineff, now of evil fame as the scene of the massacre of Jews in 1903. One circumstance connected with this episode in Pushkin's life must not be passed over, since it so thoroughly characterizes the position occupied by literary men at this period. It was currently reported in those circles of society which pretended to be well informed that, previously to his exile, Pushkin had been whipped in the punishment cell of the secret police department. The report reached the ears of the poet, and in a letter discovered among his papers after his death we find the following indignant reference to the insulting rumor: "In my first fury I resolved henceforth to emphasize my conversation and my poems with such insolences and revolutionary extravagances as should compel the government to treat me as a political criminal. I longed for exile to Siberia, as the one means left me to gain back my lost honor." How deeply he felt his enforced separation from everything that was dear to him is evident, not only from numerous letters addressed to his friends, but from the general tone of *The Caucasian Prisoner*, *The Gypsies*, and other poems which he composed at this time. And though we must not push the comparison too far, it is

impossible not to identify the poet with Aleko, the hero of *The Gypsies*, while in the tale related by the old chieftain of Ovid's banishment and sojourn on the shores of the Danube he expressed the sorrows of his own exile.

There is no occasion to dwell on the extravagances of which Pushkin was guilty during his residence at Kischineff. Cut off from all that could appeal to his better nature, he sought distraction in mad revels and noisy pleasures, the evils of which none felt more acutely than himself. "As far as I could understand Pushkin," writes one who knew him well, "he seemed to me to be a man who rioted over the bottle, or gave himself to the card table, without feeling any real inclination for either the one or the other." Happily, in the autumn of 1824, his sentence of exile was so far revoked that he was allowed to return to Michaelovsky, and two years later he obtained, principally through the intercession of Jukovsky, the permission to reside in any part of the empire.

Soon after his arrival in Moscow he was presented to the emperor, who, having received him with marked kindness, and conversed with him for some time, suddenly put to him the startling question: "Pushkin, if you had been in St. Petersburg, should you have taken part in the December revolt?" "Most certainly, your majesty," was the frank reply; "nearly all my friends were concerned in it, and I never would have abandoned them; but, as it is, thank God, my absence saved me." "I think," said the emperor, "you have been up to enough mischief; I hope you have grown wiser and will get into no further trouble. Only see that you send

direct to me all that you write; from to-day I will be your censor." Nicholas was evidently pleased with Pushkin's manly bearing, and that same evening told Bloudoff: "To-day I have had a long talk with the cleverest man in Russia." When asked of whom he might be speaking, he replied: "Pushkin, to be sure. Who else could it be?" While at Michaelovsky, Pushkin wrote, in addition to a number of lyrics, the first half of *Evjenie Onegin*, *Boris Godunoff* and *Count Nouline*, and during his stay at Moscow, in 1826, completed *Onegin* and wrote the most finished of all his poems, *Poltava*.

Marriage and Death.

In 1831 Pushkin married Mlle. Gontchareff, with whose family he had long been on the most intimate terms. For six years they lived in perfect happiness, and then stories affecting the honor of his wife began to be circulated, and a number of anonymous letters were received by Pushkin, in which her name was coupled with that of Dantes, a young cavalry officer noted for his irregularities. Without entering into details, it will be sufficient to state that Dantes was convicted of being himself the author of both the reports and the letters, and that the innocence of the lady, to whose sister he was at that time engaged, but whose name he had sought to sully, was completely established. But the poet was determined to be revenged, and wrote a letter to Dantes in which he vehemently denounced "the pitiable rôle which he had played in this affair." A duel followed in which Pushkin was mortally

wounded. His seconds conveyed him home, and carrying him to his study proceeded to break the news to his wife. When she hurried to the couch on which the poet had been placed he seized her hand, and pressing it affectionately to his lips, murmured: "I thank God that I am permitted to have thee once more by my side." She inquired if he would not wish some of his relatives or friends to be summoned; he turned his eyes to the shelves containing his favorite books and muttered in a low voice, "Farewell, my friends!" His last hours were cheered by frequent and kind messages from the emperor. "Tell him," said Nicholas to Jukovsky, "that his wife and children I will take under my protection." In the afternoon of the second day of acutest suffering he uttered his last words, "Life is ended."

His untimely death was mourned as a national bereavement, and from all parts of the empire men and women flocked to pay their last homage to Russia's great poet. He had often expressed a wish to be buried at Michaelovsky, and his body was accordingly transported thither, near the home of his early youth. A plain marble cross surmounts his grave, bearing the simple inscription, "A. S. P." Forty-three years after his death the first and only statue raised to his memory was unveiled at Moscow, his native city, amid solemnities which attested the debt owed to Pushkin.

Eugene Onegin.

Pushkin still remains the greatest poet that Russia has produced. Since his death, the most prominent

names have been those of Lermontoff and Nekrasoff, both writers of genius, but confessedly his inferiors.

The dramatic poem of *Eugene Onegin* must, on the whole, be considered Pushkin's masterpiece. Though in places reminding us of Byron, it is no mere imitation, and is not liable to the charge of plagiarism. It exhibits a blending of satire, pathos and humor, with excellent character painting and descriptions of scenery remarkably true to nature.

Belinsky, the ablest Russian critic, commences his famous review of this poem by frankly confessing that it is "not without some natural fears" that he had undertaken the task. To a foreigner the difficulties arising from the thoroughly national character of the poem must be still greater, and he constantly risks the danger of quarrelling with particular traits of character or scenery that strike him as trivial or unreal, through lack of that larger knowledge of Russian life and thought to which a native only can attain. We may regard the work as Pushkin's truest and fullest profession of faith, in which are set forth in a light, easy, mocking manner, the vain foibles, dull emptiness, and lip beliefs of his country and age. In form and style it may occasionally recall Byron's *Don Juan*; but Pushkin himself deprecated any such comparison, and declared that "in the whole of *Onegin* there is not a trace of Byronic satire." The shape given to his poem was not the result of any desire to copy Byron, but was adopted merely because no other style could possibly reflect the temper and disposition that now inspired the creations of the poet.

Pushkin had outlived his belief in melodramatic heroism; and if Onegin, fancying himself to be suffering from the fashionable disease of his century, complains that he has already felt the fullness of satiety, and tries to drape himself with Childe Harold's mantle, the outward pose never touches the inner nature of the man; he never loses the stamp of his Muscovite origin, and if he assumed misanthropy, remains as Russian as he had been in the noisy pleasures of his early youth. On flying the world of fashion, Onegin is driven to shut himself up in country retirement, where he passes whole days in "knocking the balls about the billiard table," and, unable to find relief in society or in study, nurses himself into a dull fever of sullen discontent with the world and mankind. To the description of these two phases in his life, both alike barren and aimless, Pushkin has devoted his poem. With that keen perception of the harmonious in art, natural to true genius, Pushkin instinctively perceived that such a picture of contemporary manners, in which the prosaic greatly outweighs the poetic, could only be given in the form of a romance, and *Eugene Onegin* is accordingly a romance in verse, with strong dramatic elements.

The story of the poem is as follows: Onegin, a St. Petersburg dandy, sated with the pleasures of town, retires for a time to his estate in the country, and there very soon becomes as cloyed with the monotonous routine of village life. While there he makes the acquaintance of Lensky, a mystic poet, who introduces him to the family of the Larens, well-to-do farmers

residing in the neighborhood, and to whose oldest daughter Lensky is engaged. Olga's sister, Tatiana, from the moment Onegin is presented to her, thinks to see in him the hero of her dreams, and confiding the secret of her love to her old faithful nurse, writes a warm and passionate letter to Onegin. The only answer she receives is the cold assurance that he is not fitted by nature for a domestic life; and the despair caused by the rejection of the love so innocently proffered is deepened by his strange conduct when next they meet. His attentions to Olga are so marked that Lensky, mad with jealousy, challenges him to fight a duel, in which the poet is mortally wounded. This catastrophe causes an estrangement between Onegin and the Larens; but Olga quickly consoles herself by marrying a young cavalry officer, while the more romantic Tatiana is lost in grief and regrets. The good mother, grieved at her melancholy listlessness, employs the only remedy with which she is acquainted and secures a good match for her in the person of a high-placed general. Not long after the marriage, Tatiana chances to meet Onegin at a fashionable ball. He is struck with the change that has come over the country girl, and remarks with wonder the grace and ease with which she plays the part of a lady of the world. The love which he had once been vainly invited to give he now feels for the first time, but in reply to his passionate advances she coldly bids him remember that "she is given to another and will ever remain faithful to him." With these words she leaves him dumbfounded, and the poet brings his story to an end by declaring that they

alone are happy who can as lightly bid adieu to the romance of life as he now parts forever from his friend Onegin.

Boris Godunoff.

One of the strangest and most interesting chapters in Russian history is that which records the rise and fall of Boris Godunoff, on which Pushkin's greatest drama is founded. After the death of Ivan the Terrible, in 1584, his eldest son, Theodore, was proclaimed tzar, but owing to his weak and vacillating character, was never anything more than a puppet in the hands of Boris, his wife's brother. A Tartar by origin, this bold and unscrupulous adventurer had gradually risen from the position of court henchman to the highest rank among the boyars. The one aim of all his schemes was to have himself elected emperor, and for this purpose he persistently courted the favor of the people by counselling and, when necessary, forcing the reigning tzar to govern with mercy and justice. He, therefore, determined to wait patiently till the soft-witted Theodore had drunk himself to death, and then claim the vacant throne.

It is true, there were, even when Theodore died, two members of the royal family who would stand in his way, and these were the tzarevitch Dmitry and Ivan's niece Maria; but such obstacles were not regarded seriously in those days of intrigue and bloodshed. Accordingly, Maria was lured into Russia from her abode in Riga, and then immured in a convent, where two years later she died, or, as is more probable, was put

to death by Godunoff's orders. The young prince, Dmitry, now remained the only bar to the consummation of Godunoff's scheme, and he was quickly removed out of the way. On May 15, 1591, the alarm bell was suddenly heard sounding from the cathedral church of Uglitch, a town on the Volga, where the prince was residing with his mother. The court-yard of the palace was speedily filled with a frightened crowd, and the tzarevitch was found, with his throat fearfully gashed, lying dead on the ground. One of Godunoff's hirelings was seized, knife in hand, on the spot and torn to pieces by the infuriated people. An inquiry was held into the death of the prince, but Boris took care that the judges were selected from among his own supporters, and he was completely exonerated by their verdict from all suspicion of complicity in the terrible crime. The people of Uglitch were, moreover, severely punished for having dared to lay hands on his retainers. A few years later Theodore died, and the boyars and clergy invited Boris to mount the throne. For a while he refused, and to give significance to his refusal, shut himself up within the monastery in which his sister, the widow of Ivan, had some years before taken the veil. Once more he was elected by a large majority of the deputies, who gathered in general assembly at Moscow from all parts of the empire to decide the question. But he still protested with mock humility against being dragged from his holy retreat to assume the dignity of czar.

It is at this critical moment in the career of Boris that the action of Pushkin's drama commences. Strictly

speaking, perhaps, it cannot be called a tragedy, but is rather a series of dramatic scenes, the historical worth of which is impaired by the servility with which the poet has followed the authority of Karamzin, whose portrait of Godunoff, however instructive it may be from a moral point of view, is at variance with the astuteness of judgment which friends and foes have alike attributed to the historian.

Pushkin's *Boris Godunoff* opened a new era in the history of the Russian drama. As a tragedian, even more than as poet, Pushkin broke loose from the trammels of classicism, and the play is completely free from those sensational effects, startling antitheses and strange anachronisms of stilted language in which the imitators of Corneille and Racine so liberally indulged. "Naturalness of scene and naturalness in dialogue," to quote his own words, "these are the first principles of all true tragedy. I have never read Calderon or Vega; but what a man was Shakespeare. I can never outlive the feeling of wonder which the study of his works has inspired."

The influence of these Shakespearean studies is perceptible not only in the outward arrangement of the drama or in the selection of those scenes in which the leading traits of the epoch are best interpreted and revealed, but in the far more important and more difficult matter of characterization. Each of the personages is made to stand out boldly and apart from the rest; all that they say is in close harmony with their actions; their words and deeds are so intimately blended that we cannot change a single speech without destroy-

ing the portrait and making it altogether that of another person. In their delineation Pushkin remains faithful to human nature. Boris is not merely a hypocrite and a tyrant, but is also endowed with those generous impulses common to us all, and in spite of his crimes, more than once wins our sympathy as he tries to gain the love of the people by his deeds of mercy. In the same way Gregory, the false Dmitry, is no vulgar impostor; but his youthful thirst for action and his readiness, at the moment when success seemed most assured, to sacrifice all for the love of Marina, enlist something more than interest in his fate and raise him above the ranks of an ordinary stage hero.

In the opening scene we are introduced to the boyar Borotinsky, whose simple-minded belief in the sincerity of Godunoff's refusal to mount the throne the more worldly Shouisky laughs to scorn, assuring him that

Boris will yet grimace a while,
Even as a drunkard before a goblet filled with wine,
But in the end will graciously consent,
And without more demur accept the crown,
And then—why, then, he will rule us,
Even as others ruled before.

Shouisky is the perfect type of a time-serving, place-seeking courtier, who yields to authority while it is strong, never allowing himself to come into collision with it, but the instant it betrays weakness, turns against it and becomes the foe of that which he had before affected to worship. The good Borotinsky takes Shouisky's warning speeches for genuine coin, and

later thinks to flatter him by reminding him how well he had foretold the course of events:

Borotinsky.—You guessed aright.

Shouisky.—

Guessed what?

Borotinsky.—Why, here but an hour ago, you remember?

Shouisky.—No, I know not of what you speak.

Borotinsky.—When the people were trooping to the Field of the Virgins,

You said——

Shouisky.—Now is not the hour to recall such things,
And I counsel you to forget them, too, while time allows.
Besides, I did but with a cunning-venomed speech
Try to probe your inmost soul,
And ferret out your secret thoughts.
But, see the people thronging to salute the tzar.
My absence may be noted and do me harm,
So, farewell, I will join the crowd.

The picture of this crowd before the gates of the monastery, waiting to learn the result of the interview between Boris and the nobles, is thoroughly Shakespearean in its coloring and tone, and nothing can exceed the fineness of touch with which the dramatist has portrayed the abject submission of the rude Moscowvite mob, who, as an old writer informs us, “being well beaten by Godunoff’s agents, did cry and howl like hungry wolves:”

First Citizen.—They have gone, now, to tzaritzta, into her cell,
Accompanied by Boris and the Patriarch and a crowd
of nobles.

Second Citizen.—And what is the news?

Third Citizen.—

Always the same.

He is still firm in his refusal, though there is some hope.

Woman.—(With child.) Don’t cry, darling, don’t cry! Look,
there is the policeman.

He'll take you if you don't leave off! So, don't cry, my darling!

Second Cit.—What do you think, couldn't we get beyond the barrier?

First Cit.—Impossible. Why, even here in the square there's no elbow-room,

And further on it is still worse. The whole of Moscow
Has turned out. Only look, the ramparts, roofs,
Each story in the Cathedral tower,
The very pinnacles and crosses of the church
Are dotted with people.

Third Cit.—In truth, 'tis a fine sight!

Second Cit.—What is that noise yonder?

First Cit.— Hush, what cries are those?
The people are weeping, tears flowing,
As down they sink to the ground like waves,
Row after row; another and another; come, mate,
It is our turn now: quick, down on your knees!

The People.—Alas, have pity on us! Rule over us!
Be to us our Gosudar, our tzar!

Second Cit.— What are they weeping for?

First Cit.—Pray, what business is that of ours? The nobles
have so ordered it.

Is it for us to ask the reason why?

Wom.—(With child.) What say you? All are ordered to weep!
And you the while sit still! I'll teach you, there's the
policeman!

Weep, you brat! (Child cries.) Ah, that's right!

First Cit.—There's not a dry eye in the crowd;
I fancy, mate, we had better join in, too.

Second Cit.—But the tears won't come! See what is going on
there?

The Peo.—He wears the crown, he is tzar, he has consented!
Boris is our Gosudar! Long live Boris!

After five years the dramatist introduces us to the
cell of Peimen, the aged chronicler, who, after having

brought the cherished work of his life to an end, relates to his monk pupil, Gregory, the tale of Ivan the Terrible, the short, ill-fated reign of his son and the murder of Dmitry, the crown prince. Apart from its mere literary excellencies, which are of the highest order, this scene is most important as giving us the keynote to the entire tragedy. During these five years Boris has ruled well and mercifully, but has failed to ingratiate himself with the people, who look upon him as the murderer of the prince and believe the wrath of heaven to be resting on their land. The terrible famine of 1602, the great fire at Moscow and the Tartar invasion of the country are regarded as certain signs of divine displeasure. Their tacit rebellion is easily crushed, but though he may elude the judgment of the people, the voice of God speaks clearly in the voice of the unsuspected monk, wherein "the sins and darker deeds" of Boris shall be laid bare :

And now there remains but one last record,
And my chronicle is ended;
The duty laid by God on me, a poor sinner,
Fulfilled. Not in vain the Lord hath called me
To be the witness and chronicler of these many years,
And made book-learning a familiar delight to me.
In days to come, some studious monk
Shall write out the nameless work of my whole life,
And lighting up, as I am wont to do, his modest lamp,
And shaking off from its parchment cover the gathered
dust,
Shall rewrite this true story of my chronicle,
That will teach future generations of the faithful
The past history of their fatherland,
Bring back to their memories tzars illustrious
In their labors, their glory, and the good they did,

And lead them fervently to pray Christ's pardon
For their sins and for their darker deeds.
In my old age I seem to live once more,
As days once gone by pass again before me.
Is it in truth so long since they flowed by,
Filled and surging, like some ocean sea, with eventful
storms?
For now they appear to me all tranquil and voiceless;
My weakened memory recalls but few of the heroes of
the past,
But few of its great words are preserved freshly in my
mind,
And the past, big with events, is, alas, irrevocable!
But dawn is near, and the lamp burns pale;
And there now remains but one last chronicle to write.

The words of Peimen discover to the ambitious Gregory a glorious future, and he resolves to fly the monastery and give himself out as the real prince Dmitry, who, the people are persuaded, had been miraculously saved from the hands of the assassins. His story obtains general credence, and before long a large and powerful party is at his command. Shouisky perceives that it will be to his advantage to go over to the winning side, but for a while affects loyalty to the Godunoffs, and warning Boris of the danger that threatens him, accepts the charge to lead the troops against the pretender. This scene, and particularly the sudden outbreak of scornful defiance on the part of Boris, as he bids his faithless adherents laugh at this "mirth-provoking" resurrection of the dead boy to war against the lawful tzar, is dramatically conceived; the higher qualities of the astute usurper are well brought out, and he proves himself to be possessed of a bold

self-reliance that enables him to confront without fear any peril:

Shouisky.—Even so, sire, it is my duty to impart
Intelligence most strange.

Boris.— I am listening; say on.

Shou.—But, sire—— (Pointing to Godunoff's son.)

Bor.— The prince, my son, may know
What Prince Shouisky has to tell. Say on.

Shou.—Sire, from Lithuania the news has come.

Bor.—Tell me, prince, is it not the same
As that which yesterday's messenger brought you?

Shou.—(Aside.) He knows all. (Aloud.) I had believed, sire,
That you were as yet unpossessed of the secret.

Bor.—It matters not, good prince. I wish to compare
Your news with mine, else it may be hard
To know the real truth.

Shou.— I only know this, my liege,
That in Crakoff a pretender has risen up,
And the Polish king and nobles have declared for him.

Bor.—And what, pray, is reported of him, who may this pre-
tender be?

Shou.—I have not yet been able to learn.

Bor.— Indeed! in what, then, is he dangerous?

Shou.—Without question, sire, your might is all-powerful;
By the clemency, zeal and munificence of your sway
You have long enchained the hearts of all your subjects;
But, you know yourself, the ignorant people
Are fickle, mutinous and credulous,
The light victim of each idle tale and hope,
Obedient to the fleeting inspiration of the moment,
Callous and indifferent to truth or right,
And greedy swallows of each lying fable;
The shameless adventurer can count upon their easy
favor.

And thus, if this nameless vagrant
Can but cross the borders of Lithuania,

At once a crowd of gaping followers will flock
To the reborn name of Dmitry.

Bor.—Dmitry, what mean you? that dead boy!

Dmitry! . . . My son, withdraw.

Shou.—(Aside.) He grows red with anger; soon his fury will
burst forth.

Bor.—Listen, prince; without delay, take instant measures
That Russia be securely cut off from Lithuania
By close serried lines of troops, so that not a soul
May cross the boundary, not a hare
Be let scud hither from Poland, not a crow
Be let fly from Crakoff. Begone!

Shou.—I go.

Bor.—Is it not true that this intelligence of yours
Is most mirth-provoking? Was there ever a time
The buried dead were known to rise from their graves
And question the tzar, the lawful tzar,
Chosen and appointed by the people,
And solemnly anointed by the holy patriarch?
Is it not, I say, mirth-provoking? Well, what?
Why do you not laugh?

At times, indeed, Boris is distracted by fears natural
even to the boldest, and in his perplexity consults
witches and diviners, who cheer him with deceiving
promises; but, in spite of his fears, he does not allow
himself to be unnerved or turned from his purpose by
any dread, lest his crime should be discovered.

I was sorely tried . . . but now, I breathe again!
I felt, whilst he spoke, the blood rush to my face,
And then leave it all pale and blenched. . . .
For thirteen years one and the same figure,
That murdered child, has haunted and pursued me.
Yes, yes—now I understand the trick.
But what is he, this all-dreaded foe,
Or what harm can he do? An empty name, a shadow!

Can then a shadow unrobe me of my royal mantle,
Or a barren name despoil my children of their rights?
Fool! there was naught to frighten thee!
Blow but a breath, and the phantom is dislimned.
So be it; I am resolved; henceforth no fear;
But still no danger must be left unheeded. . . .
Alas, how heavily sits the crown of Monomach!

At length a decisive battle is fought, and victory declares for Boris; but the victory can bring to the conqueror neither peace nor security. He feels that his enemy, temporarily discomfited though he may be, is able to rely on a force stronger than any he can wield, the faith and confidence of the people. He knows that the false boyars despise his low descent, and among themselves speak of him as "the son-in-law of a Tartar hangman, and in his soul himself a hangman." More than once he is made to feel the aversion in which the common people hold him and his race, as when a crazed beggar, who has been robbed of his last pence, cries out in the market-place for help, with the words: "Boris, Boris! let the thief's throat be slit, even as you did cut the throat of the boy-prince Dmitry." And at the very moment when he is planning the final stroke by which he hopes to rid himself forever of his enemies, the hand of death falls suddenly upon him, and the ill-secured throne descends to the young and inexperienced Theodore. The nobles and princes are assembled before the Kremlin to kiss the cross and swear allegiance to the new sovereign, but Shouisky persuades Basmanoff, the leader of the royal troops, to espouse the cause of the pretender. Theodore and his sister Xenia are closely confined in the palace,

and in the concluding scene of the tragedy, which takes place immediately under the windows of their rooms, the fall of the Godunoffs is sketched with that power of simplicity which forms the most striking characteristic of Pushkin's genius:

Beggar.—For the love of Christ, show charity!

Sentinel.—Move on; no one is allowed to speak with the prisoners.

Theodore.—Go, old man; I am still poorer than thyself, for thou at least art free.

First Citizen.—Brother and sister, poor things, prisoned like birds in a cage!

Second Citizen.—Much pity they deserve, the accursed race!

First Citizen.—The father, I grant, was a murderer; but the children have done no wrong.

Third Citizen.—They are all alike, all apples of one tree.

Xenia.—Brother, brother! I think the boyars are coming hither.

Theodore.—Yes, I see Golitzin and Mosalsky; but the others are strangers to me.

The People.—Make place, make place; room for the boyars!

First Citizen.—Wherefore are the boyars come?

Second Citizen.—It may be to take the oath to young Theodore.

First Citizen.—Indeed? But hark, what noise is that within the palace? They are fighting and struggling there.

Voices from the Crowd.—Listen, a woman's shriek! Let us force our way in! The gates are closed, and now the cries are hushed.

Mosalsky.—Maria Godunoff and her son Theodore have poisoned themselves. We have seen their dead bodies. (A dead silence prevails.) Well, why keep you silent? Quick, cry, Long life to the Tzar, Dmitry Ivanovitch! (The people continue silent.)

With these words the tragedy ends, and by their silence the people have pronounced the righteous punishment that shall ere long overtake the dethroners of the Godunoff race.

Besides *Boris Godunoff*, Pushkin wrote several dramatic sketches, evidently intended to form parts of different plays which he had planned, but unfortunately did not live to complete. Of these the most noteworthy are *Mozart and Saglieri*, *The Statue Guest*, *Rousalka*, *The Covetous Knight*, *A Feast During the Plague* and *Angelo*.

Mozart and Saglieri.

The earliest of these sketches is founded on the fact that at the first representation of *Don Juan*, while all were lost in silent admiration of Mozart's harmonious strains, a loud, sharp hiss was heard from a remote part of the theatre, and immediately afterward the famous composer, Saglieri, was seen to quit the house, pale with anger and envy. "There is no injustice done to his memory," writes Pushkin, "in supposing that the man who hissed *Don Juan* could be guilty of poisoning the composer." Notwithstanding its fragmentary character, the piece is marked by an unwonted power in subtle analysis of human motive. Two opposing types are set forth, the man of talent and the man of genius. Equally with Mozart, Saglieri is possessed with a love for his art, in the cultivation of which he finds his greatest joy, but he does not worship art for itself, is not content with the unmixed reward it affords and regards it but as a stepping-stone to fame. He feels how grudg-

ingly and in what small measure this fame, to win which he is eager to sacrifice and forego all the pleasures of life, has crowned the unresting labors of long years, while unsought and unasked for, it lightens up the lot of true genius that works unconsciously and reaps without effort its full and priceless recompense. He, the hard, patient toiler, is denied that wondrous gift which, unless born in a man, can never be acquired, and regrets that it should thus lavishly have wasted itself on "an easy idler" like Mozart. He cannot understand the indifference with which true genius regards the judgment the world may pronounce upon its creations. Thus, after Mozart had played a fantasia which he had composed during a sleepless night, Saglieri exclaims:

Thou art a god, Mozart, and dost not know it,
But I know it, I!

Mozart makes the bantering reply:

Really? it may be so! . . .
But my godship is deuced hungry.

There is in the reply something that piques his curiosity as to what this man really is, and at the same time arouses anger that the "godship" should be accepted with complacent off-hand assumption of his rightful claim to it. The two men agree to meet in the evening to sup together, and at table the conversation turns on Beaumarchais and the common report that he has sought the death of a friend of whose fame as a dramatist he was jealous. Saglieri rejects the re-

port on the ground that "the man is too much of a buffoon for such deeds," while Mozart, unwilling and unable to conceive that ill can dwell with the divine, passionately cries out:

But he is a genius,
As you or I! And genius and evil
Are two things incompatible. Is it not so?

These words, innocently uttered, rankle the sore wound, and seem to be a reproach to the man who is conscious of the baseness of the crime he is about to commit; but he is still willing to commit it, in order that a greater than himself may not cross his path to fame; and with the taunt, "You think so?" he secretly pours poison into the glass of his friend and prays him to drink. When, having drunk the poison, Mozart sits down to the piano and plays, the soul of his assassin is touched, and the sweet melody of the newly composed *Requiem* moves him to tears:

These tears
Are the first I shed; and in them is a pleasure and a pain,
As if at length I had satisfied some heavy claim,
As if some surgeon's knife had keenly cut off
Some ill limb. These tears, dear Mozart,
Pay no heed to them. Play on, I pray thee,
And fill my soul yet fuller with sweet harmonies.

The Statue Guest.

Pushkin's *Statue Guest* is a variation of the Spanish story of *Don Juan*. It is one of the most artistically constructed of all his works, and exhibits a rare harmony between the idea that underlies the drama and

the form which the idea is to assume. The hero is endowed with all those external graces which we are wont to associate with the typical Don Juan; but the poet has at the same time taken care to attribute to him certain qualities more peculiar to the Russian than to the Spanish lover. There is in his speech a cynicism that, if not altogether affected, is at least strained, in the evident desire to quell the better instincts of his nature and enable him to play more boldly the part of a man who, through his larger experience of the world, has broken from the faith and traditions of the somewhat narrow circle in which he was born. At the opening of the drama we find him, in spite of the sentence of exile pronounced against him, returned in disguise to Madrid, attended by his faithful Leporello. The familiar scenes recall to him more than one of his love adventures of the past, and his thoughts fly back to the days when his heart was divided between Inez, with her soft, low voice, and Laura, the gay actress. For a moment his better feelings gain the ascendancy, and he involuntarily regrets the idle pursuit of pleasures which are no sooner enjoyed than despised, nor can the railleries of Leporello arouse him from his melancholy musings:

Leporello.—Well, what then? You have loved others since Inez.

Don Juan.—That is true.

Leporello.—And if we only live, others will surely follow.

Don Juan.—Even so.

He pays a visit to Laura, during which he slays Don Carlos, her lover, and then, learning that Donna Anna

is on her way to pray at the tomb of her husband, whose death in a duel had been the cause of his banishment from Madrid, disguises himself as a monk and resolves to woo her at the very foot of the monument raised to the memory of her beloved. Not suspecting with whom she is speaking, she begs him to join his prayers with hers, to which he makes the characteristic reply:

Don Juan.—I, I pray with you, Donna Anna!

I am not worthy of such a part.

Nor will I dare, with unholy lips,

Repeat your words of sacred prayer.

Rather from afar with reverent gaze,

Will I watch you, as bending low

You sweep the pale marble with your raven locks,

While it will seem to me that, on some secret errand,

A heavenly angel has descended to this tomb.

It is not in the troubled heart that prayer

Can hope to find its place. Thus will I dumb remain,

And think, how happy that cold marble

To glow with her soft breathed kisses,

And bedewed with her tears of love.

The whole scene is drawn with great force; and when, though still concealing his name, he confesses to be no monk and to have been urged to address her by a passion against which it were vain to struggle, the woman's vanity is touched, and her query, "Is it, then, long that you thus loved me?" shows that she is already yielding, and that the adventurous suitor need not despair of ultimately gaining his end. Before they part she promises to receive him at her house on the evening of the next day. Don Juan is in raptures at the success of his scheme, and defiantly invites the statue "to come on the morrow to his widow's house

and stand sentinel at the door." The interview takes place, and, all disguise thrown off, her suitor declares his name:

Donna Anna.—

Leave me.

Thou, thou art my unkindest foe: thou didst rob me
Of all, of everything in life.

Don Juan.—

Fair creature!

I am ready to sacrifice all in expiation of that blow
And at thy feet I wait thy command;
Say but the word—I die; bid me live—I live
Only for thee.

Donna Anna.—

And so thou art Don Juan!

Don Juan.—Is it not true, thou hast been taught

To look upon me as a wretch and monster?

It may be that fame has done me wrong,

Or it may be that my burdened conscience

Is weighted with much ill; but from the hour

I first saw thee all is changed within me,

And it seems to me I am new-born.

In loving thee, I also love the good,

And for the first time I bend my knee

In lowly homage before virtue's throne.

Donna Anna.—Ah, Don Juan, thou art eloquent, I know;

I oft have heard of thy glib tongue and cunning wile;

They say, thou art a godless libertine,

An incarnate demon. How many poor women

Hast thou wrecked?

Don Juan.—

Not one, till now,

Not one of them did I e'er love!

Donna Anna.—

And shall I believe

That Don Juan is now first in love,

That he is not e'en now seeking a fresh victim to his lust?

Don Juan.—And had I thought to deceive thee, lady,

Why have told thee, then, my name,

Which must have ever remained unknown to thee

In which, I pray, consists my treachery or deceit?

Donna Anna.—Who can tell? But how camest thou here?
Easily thou mayst be discovered,
And then thy death is sure and certain.

Don Juan.—And thou art anxious for Don Juan's life?
I knew that hate could find no harbor in thy soul!

Donna Anna.—Ah, would to heaven, I could but hate thee.
But it is time, and we must part.

Don Juan.—To meet again?

Donna Anna.— I know not;
Perhaps some future day.

Don Juan.— Say, to-morrow.

Donna Anna.—Where?

Don Juan.—Here!

Donna Anna.—Ah, Don Juan, how weak I am of heart!

In accordance with the old legend, the drama closes with the appearance of the statue. The conclusion is necessarily somewhat ludicrous to a modern reader who has no belief in ghosts or nodding statues. But, while adhering to the fable, Pushkin has not failed to imply the lesson we may learn from the fate of Don Juan, and though the statue spoils the effect that fate is designed to produce, the poet cannot be blamed for making it the avenger of the crime.

The Water-Nymph.

Russian fairy lore has seldom been made to assume a more poetical form than that in which it is presented in Pushkin's *Rousalka*, or the *Water-Nymph*. The story turns on the old theme of love betrayed; but Pushkin has succeeded in investing it with all the tragic horror of an exceptional and unwonted incident. The

daughter of a miller is courted by a prince, only to be abandoned on the idle pretext that his position forbids him to marry one who is inferior in social rank, and the father, flattered at the thought that his daughter should be sought after by a nobleman, does his best to urge her not to let slip so good a chance of bettering her fortune. And though there is nothing radically vicious in the character of the man, the temptation of rank, title and wealth is sufficiently strong to stifle the feelings natural to a father. Even when he perceives that the prince is growing colder in his suit, and that his visits, once so constant, are each week becoming rarer and shorter, he has no thought of his daughter's misery, but implores her not to lose what may be the last opportunity, and when he next comes, to beg something of her rich lover. It is while he is giving this worldly advice that the prince, after a long absence, suddenly presents himself. There is a restraint in his bearing and an involuntary hesitation in his speech that only serve to awaken suspicion, and with all a woman's quick impetuosity to know the worst, she checks his labored excuses with the cry,

Enough! now I know all, now I understand;
Thou thinkst to marry? Thou wilt marry?

Prince.—What can I do?

Be thyself my judge. Princes are not free,
Like common maidens; they cannot choose for wife
The woman they love best, but must marry as others
Decide for them from interest or some extraneous advantage.

But God and time will bring thee comfort and relief.
Only, forget me not, and as a remembrance, take,

I pray, this fillet. Lean down and let me put it on.
 I have also brought a necklace with me.
 I pray thee, take it. Ah, and here, too,
 Is something for thy father—give it him from me.
 And now—farewell.

Miller's Daughter.—Stay! there was something I wished to say,
 But what it was I cannot now remember.

Prince.—Think; it will come back.

Miller's Daughter.—I am willing to sacrifice all for—— But no,
 it was not that—— Stay!

It cannot be that we must part forever,
 And that thou wilt now abandon me—— No, no, it was
 not that——

Ah, now I remember—to-day I felt a new life move
 within me!

In answer to her cry of despair, the prince has nothing to offer save a few conventional words of sympathy, and muttering to himself, "Thank God, it is over! I feel lighter and easier at heart; I had expected a storm, but it all passed quietly enough," he quits her, ignorant in his callous selfishness that this unnatural calm was far more terrible than any storm of uncontrolled and frenzied passion. Unable to bear the heavy shame, the poor girl throws herself into the Dnieper and is transformed into a rousalka, or water-nymph. In the meantime the marriage takes place and is being duly celebrated with all the pomp and quaint ceremonies peculiar to a Russian wedding. But suddenly the joyous song of the maidens is interrupted by a loud, shrill voice, whose strange fantastic chant is heard above all the din and noise of the feast:

Over the reeds and over the yellow sand
The swift stream chattering runs;
In the swift stream two fishes are playing,
Two fishes, two tiny red-finned roaches.
Hearken, sisters mine, and have you heard
The tale our swift flowing stream has to tell?
How yestern eve the ruddy maiden drowned herself,
And cursed her false lover as she sank?

The well-known voice is recognized by the prince, who at once orders search to be made for the miller's daughter, but she is nowhere to be found. When the poet next resumes his story, a period of twelve years is supposed to have elapsed, and we are transported to the banks of the Dnieper. The hour of the rousalka's revenge, though long delayed, has at length arrived. By a strange fatality which he cannot resist, the prince is compelled to haunt the scenes of his crime, and many a day he wanders there, listening to the sad moanings of the river. On one occasion he meets, first the father, whom the loss of his daughter has driven mad, and then the water-nymph's child, who with her prattle decoys him to the edge of the stream. It is at this juncture that the drama abruptly terminates. But notwithstanding its fragmentary character, it bears the impress of a ripe and fully-developed genius, and the legendary story, with all its fabulous machinery, is endowed with the power of a tragedy of real life.

V.

Gogol.

With the close of the eighteenth century there disappeared from Russia the dazzle and glitter which for well-nigh half a century had blinded the eyes of Europe. Catherine was dead, as also were nearly all the more distinguished members of her brilliant court. And now, stripped of its coat of whitewash, autocracy stood bare in all its blackness. Instead of Mother Catherine, Father Paul was now ruling, and a step-father, in truth, he was to his people. Such was the terror inspired by this czar that, at the sight of their sovereign, his subjects scattered in all directions, like mice at the sight of a cat. At last Panin originates, Pahlen organizes and Benigsen executes a plan, the accomplishment of which finds Paul lying in state, with a purple face, and the marks of the shawl which strangled him carefully hid by a high collar. "His majesty died of apoplexy," the people are told.

Alexander I and Nicholas.

Alexander "the Benign" succeeds to the throne, greeted by his subjects like an angel in the ecstasy of

the delivery, but cursed like a demon ere the five-and-twenty years of his reign have passed. The Holy Alliance with Shishkof and Arakcheyef is more than even Russia can endure, and at last a formidable protest is made by the armed forces of the Decembrists. The protest fails; five bodies swinging from the gallows and a hundred exiles buried in Siberia alive leave a monument of such failure, terrible in its ghastliness even for Russian annals. The iron hand of Nicholas now rests on the country, and for thirty years the autocrat can proudly say that now peace and quiet reign in Russia. The peace of death, the quiet of the grave.

But not all is quiet. Defeated in arms, the spirit of protest finds a battle-field where neither the trampling of horses nor the shot of cannon can avail. The spirit of man intrenches itself behind ideas, behind letters, and here it proves impregnable even against the autocracy of a Nicholas. The times call for the voice, and presently the voice is heard. It is the voice of Nicolai Gogol. He protests against the weakness of aristocracy, against what his noble soul abhors; but it was not given to him to announce the loftiest message, the message of peace, of love, of submission, the message of Tolstoi; the times were not ripe for it; they called rather for anger and indignation, and of these Gogol was the exponent.

Russian Realism.

The fables of Krilov served to introduce into Russian literature a new and all-powerful element—that

of realism. The pompous ode, with its monotonous imitation of an antiquated classicism, and the sentimental idyl, with its affected jargon of Arcadian life, were no longer recognized as the highest forms of poetic expression, and the poet was expected to be the interpreter, not only of the loftier, rarer and nobler manifestations of humanity, but also of the daily cares, trivialities and solemn nothings of man's existence. But, like all great movements, whether in the world of politics or of letters, this reform was effected gradually and slowly, and it obtained its first consummation in Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.

Nor was this change confined to poetry; but the prose writers and Romancists of Russia, disregarding the traditions of the past, ceased to copy foreign styles which naturally had nothing in common with the history or character of the Russian people, and little by little created a new and thoroughly national literature. Of all the writers who contributed to this transformation of the novel and the drama into the faithful reflection of the soul and nature of man, Gogol, both in point of date and of genius, was the first to note and seize upon the frailties that attend the best of us, to depict without exaggeration and without malice the wearying and commonplace details of daily life, to tear off the gloss of selfishness and deceit.

Gogol's Youth.

Nicholas Vassilivitch Gogol was born on March 19, 1810, at the town of Sorotchintzi, in the Ukraine.

Separated, at most, by one or two generations from the last of the Cossack wars, Gogol in his youth must have often heard from the mouth of his grandfather these stories of wild heroism and courage of which he was later himself the chronicler. He was educated, first in a public gymnasium at Poltava, and subsequently in the lyceum then newly established at Niejinsk. Numerous anecdotes have been handed down relating to these school days, and we read how he was wont to employ his leisure hours in writing original compositions, now in prose and now in verse, some of which obtained the honor of being recited in public at the annual commemorations. The death of his father, in 1825, the first great sorrow of his life, contributed not a little to confirm the melancholy of his character, a melancholy which at an early period cast a gloom over his whole career and made his biography one of the most painful records to be found in the annals of literature.

We are accustomed to think of Gogol as a humorist, and we find it difficult to believe that, at the very time when he was writing tales whose wild, reckless drollery provokes the sternest to laughter, the man was suffering and struggling to escape, if only for a moment, from the terrible thoughts of divine displeasure with which his soul was haunted. "The source of all the gayety," he writes in his *Confessions of an Author*, "which characterises my early compositions, is to be found in a spiritual necessity of my nature. I was suffering from fits of despair, the origin of which I could scarcely explain to myself, but which may have

been caused by my habitual ill-health. In order, therefore, to distract my ideas and give them, if possible, another direction, I used to imagine the most ridiculous scenes, picture to myself absurd personages and characters, and place them in circumstances as ridiculous as themselves."

The circumstances of the family had, at best, at times been straitened; but their position, on the death of their father, became still more precarious, and Gogol was obliged to quit the lyceum and choose some profession which should secure for him a livelihood. He resolved to devote himself to literature, and, as was natural to a youth whose entire knowledge of the world was confined to the narrowest sphere of provincial life, imagined that he had only to make his home at St. Petersburg in order to win wealth and reputation. But even this worthy desire was regarded by Gogol as nothing else than an unworthy concession to the temptations of the flesh. "Alas," he exclaims, "why is one so eager in the pursuit of happiness? The mere thought of St. Petersburg torments me day and night; my soul longs to break its narrow prison, and my blood boils with impatience."

Experiences in St. Petersburg.

The hopes of young Gogol were for a long time cruelly disappointed. His first literary effort, a poem on Italy, was rejected, in turn, by the editors of the chief metropolitan journals; the publication of his second work, *Hans Kuchelhart*, called forth from Pole-

voi, a reviewer, who then enjoyed no little authority, so merciless a criticism that the author withdrew the book from sale and burned every copy; his applications to enter the government service encountered unexpected difficulties and delays; his first appearance on the stage, to which he was tempted by the applause he had obtained as an amateur actor at Niejinsk, was so unsuccessful that the manager of the theatre refused to give him another part; his remittances from home were so scanty and irregular that frequently, in the depth of winter, wood was too expensive a luxury to allow him to heat his room.

Such, briefly, were Gogol's earliest experiences of the golden capital. It was not possible that under these circumstances, St. Petersburg could possess any attraction for him, and in more than one letter he briefly complains of the emptiness of its life, as he turns with uneasy longing to the home he had quitted and to its free, simple pleasures which he was never again to enjoy. All his failures he attributed to his impious rejection of a life of religious solitude, "which God had marked out for him," but to which he had preferred "vain and idle pursuits that must forever be a reproach and burden to his soul." He became a victim to the wildest hallucinations, and he describes to his mother a wild vision he had beheld of a threatening, angry figure, which, though it bore a woman's face, could have been no earthly woman, but one whom even to her he dares not name. "I saw her," he writes to his mother, "but I cannot name her—she is too majestic, too awful for any mortal, not only for me, to

name. That face, whose brilliant glory in one moment burns into the heart; those eyes that quickly pierce the inner soul; that consuming, all-penetrating gaze, these are the traits of none that is born of woman. Oh, if you had only seen me in that moment! True, I could hide myself from all, but how hide myself from myself? The pains of hell, with every possible torture, filled my breast. Oh, what a cruel condition! I think, whatever the hell prepared for sinners may be, its tortures cannot equal mine." The story of his dream reminds us of the strange apparition that disturbed the peace of Cowper, or the threatening arm and angry brow that startled Bunyan from his games at Elstow common.

Gogol now began to occupy himself with a series of short tales intended to describe the life and habits of little Russia. The numerous letters he wrote at this time to his mother might be quoted in evidence of the pains he took to render his sketches true in their minutest details. They are filled with questions concerning the costumes worn by the peasantry, the names given to various articles of attire, the traditional ceremonies with which they observed the different festivals of the year, and the superstitions, legends and fairy tales that still found credence among them.

Evenings in a Farm-House.

In preparing the volume, Gogol was greatly assisted by the advice of Pletneff, one of his friends in St. Petersburg, who recognized his talents, and at whose sugges-

tion the title of *Evenings in a Farm-House* was adopted. It was received somewhat coldly by a public accustomed to the highly-spiced romances of writers like Zagoskin and Marlinsky, but gradually worked its way into general favor, "and," says Belinsky, "though romancists and novelists of the old school condemned Gogol and sneered at his writings, they themselves before long began involuntarily to adopt his style and imitate his manner." The impression it produced on more competent critics may be judged from the enthusiasm with which Pushkin speaks of it in a letter to the editor of one of the St. Petersburg journals :

"I have just read the *Evenings in a Farm-House*, and am lost in admiration at their natural, unaffected and unforced humor, while many passages are characterized by the truest poetry and feeling. All this is so unusual a phenomenon in our literature that I have not yet recovered from my first feelings of astonishment. I am told that once, when the publisher went into the press-room, where *Evenings* were being printed, the type-setters began covering their mouths with their hands in order to stop giggling and laughing. The foreman explained to the surprised publisher that the workmen, while setting up the type, were almost dying with laughter. I fancy that Molière and Fielding would have felt honored by such a homage to their wit."

Pushkin's Friendship.

Within a few months after its publication, Gogol, by means of a commendatory letter from Jukovsky,

made Pushkin's acquaintance. The friendship soon ripened into the closest intimacy, and if Gogol sufficiently succeeded in overcoming his natural timidity to persevere in the career he had embraced, it was mainly owing to the kindly counsel and generous encouragement of the poet, then in the full zenith of his popularity. The subject, as well as the titles of some of Gogol's later works—among them *The Revisor* and *The Dead Souls*—were suggested to him by Pushkin, and everything that he wrote, before it was allowed to appear in print, was previously submitted to his friend's judgment and approval.

It was also through Pushkin's recommendation that Gogol was appointed teacher of history at the Patriotic institution, a position which he exchanged in 1834 for the professorship of history in the university of St. Petersburg. But he was little fitted, either by education or by his habits of life, for such a post and resigned it after one year, during which time he delivered only two lectures. In the meantime he published a second volume of Russian stories as well as his historical romance, *Tarass Bulba*. The summer of 1835 he spent with his mother and sisters, and it was then that he wrote the greater part of *The Revisor*, the production of which, shortly after his return, caused no little excitement in the bureaucratic circles of St. Petersburg society. "All are in arms against me," is the account he gives to his mother of the reception of his comedy; "the old titled government clerks cry out that it is plain nothing is sacred in my eyes when I dare to speak so insolently of men who are in the

service; the police, writers, merchants, are all to a man against me; everybody condemns me, and yet everybody goes to see the piece, and at the fourth representation numbers were unable to get a place in the theatre. Had it not been for the express interference of the emperor, on no account would the play have been allowed to be put on the stage, and even now there are some doing all they can to get it withdrawn by the censor."

The success attained by *The Revisor* brought with it a marked improvement in the material circumstances of Gogol's life, and he was enabled to travel abroad, visiting first Switzerland and then Italy, where he lived for several years. It was at Rome, while busily engaged in the composition of *The Dead Souls*, that he received the sad news of Pushkin's duel and its tragic end, and in the death of his friend he seemed to have lost part of himself.

Gogol's Last Years.

In 1840 Gogol returned to Russia for a short period, in order to superintend the publication of the first volume of *The Dead Souls*. From the appearance of this volume dates the close of his literary career; for though he afterward published his *Correspondence with My Friends*, the work can only be regarded as the production of a disordered and enfeebled intellect. It was written at a time when his religious enthusiasm had attained its extremest violence, and the impression it makes on the reader is extremely painful. The ascetic severities of his religious creed were practised

with a persistency that could have but one result—the complete prostration of bodily strength; and his death, which took place in the spring of 1852, is declared by the doctor who attended him to have been caused by long-continued and excessive fastings. During his final illness it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be persuaded to take any food, while every kind of medicine was rejected on the plea that “if it be God’s will that I should live, He will of Himself prolong my life.” His only words, when any attempt was made to relieve his pains, were “Do not torment me,” and he lay for days motionless and speechless, his hands closed tightly on a rosary and his eyes fixed on a picture of the Virgin that was suspended on the wall. One of his last acts was to burn the manuscript of the concluding portion of *The Dead Souls* and to write a few lines, in which he prays that all his works may be forgotten as the products of a pitiable vanity, composed at a time when he was still ignorant of the true interests and duties of man.

Features of Gogol's Works.

Admirers of the modern sensational novel may look upon the works of Gogol as insipidly commonplace and exhibiting a sad poverty of invention. Nothing can exceed their simplicity of plot. In most of them there is an entire absence of intrigue. What, for instance, is the subject of his *Old-fashioned Farmers*? Two country boors, living in a dull round of thoughtless content, spend their sixty or seventy years in eating

and drinking, and when they have eaten and drunk their fill, die off. Utterly incapable of the slightest intellectual effort, ignorant of all the higher impulses and nobler aspirations that dignify our nature, unconscious of any pleasure beyond the satisfaction of those instincts which man shares in common with the beasts of the field—what interest can there be in the record of a life like theirs? All the emptiness, poverty and bare nakedness of their existence is exposed; not a single detail in their petty, monotonous career—each day the dull repetition of yesterday's aimless life is forgotten or passed over; and yet, such is the power of art, even when exercised on the most trivial of themes, that what in unskilled hands would have sunk into revolting burlesque becomes with Gogol the source of truest poetry and kindest humor.

Gogol's Humor.

In one of his shorter sketches, entitled *My Return Home from the Theatre*, Gogol writes: "I am very sorry that one of the worthiest characters in my comedy failed to attract the attention and favor of the public. And yet this honorable, worthy personage played a most important part in the piece from beginning to end. The honorable, worthy personage of whom I speak is—Humor. He proved his worthiness by boldly presenting himself before the public, notwithstanding the little respect in which the world is pleased to hold him. He proved his worthiness by not being deterred by the fact that he is called by some

a clown, by others an egotist, and is believed by all to be without any of the finer feelings of the soul. No one would think of defending a humor of this kind. But I am a comedian; I have been long in his service, and ought not to shrink from saying a word in his favor. For humor is a far deeper and far more important element in human nature than some of us are inclined to imagine."

Gogol's humor is quiet and subdued in tone. This forced absence of passion gives strength to Gogol's satire and makes his irony biting. By a single word or a trifling phrase he will plant the blow aimed at some social folly or administrative vice with a vigor and certainty that renders it fatal. Thus, in the description of a general's daughter, which he puts into the mouth of a poor tchinovnik, or government functionary, who is infatuated with her beauty, after having made him expatiate on the charms of her person, with what exquisite banter does he sum up the cringing subserviency natural to his position in one expressive sentence, "her very handkerchief exhales the essence of a general's rank." Or, to select a passage from *The Revisor*, a comedy every scene of which abounds with similar touches of dry humor. The prefect is alarmed at the intelligence that his superior, the revising officer, may be expected on any day or at any hour, and begs the postmaster to open all the letters that in the meantime pass through his office. That exemplary official informs him that such has been his custom, "not from any state reason," as he takes care to explain, "but from curiosity;" some of the letters he had opened being so

entertaining that he really could not find the heart to send them on, but has kept them in his desk. When reminded by a cautious colleague that this is likely to get him into trouble with the public, the prefect cuts short the remonstrance by crying out: "Ah, batoushka, don't you see this is a family affair of our own; what has the public to do with it?"

Russian Patriotism.

The writings of Gogol are not only distinguished by a nationality in their style, subject and tone of thought, but are also inspired by a spirit of true patriotism and a warm, loving, eager pride in the fame and progress of his country. In his humor, in his irony, in his ideas, in his occasional outbursts of lyrical eloquence and in his pathos Gogol is thoroughly Russian. With what fondness does he turn away dissatisfied with all the trophies of natural and artistic beauty that surrounded his Roman house, as his mind flies back to his distant but unforgotten land, in whose vastness he thinks he sees the promise of her future glory!

"Russia, Russia! My thoughts turn to thee from my wondrous, beautiful foreign home, and I seem to see thee once more. Nature has not been lavish in her gifts to thee. No grand views to cheer the eye or inspire the soul with awe; no glorious works of art, no many-windowed cities, with their lofty palaces planted on some precipice, embowered in groves and ivy that clings to the walls, amid the eternal roar and foam of waterfalls. No traveller turns back to gaze on huge masses

of mountain granite that tower in endless succession above and around him. No distant, far-stretching lines of lofty hills ranging upward to the bright blue heavens, and of which we catch faint glimpses through dim arches entwined with vine branches, ivy and myriads of wild roses. All with thee is level, open and monotonous. The low-built cities are like tiny dots that indistinctly mark the centre of some vast plain; nor is there aught to win or delight the eye. And yet, what is this inconceivable force that attracts me to thee? Why do I seem to hear again, and why are my ears filled with the sounds of thy sad songs, as they are wafted along thy valleys and huge plains, and are carried hither from sea to sea? What is there in that song which, as it calls and wails, seizes on the heart? What are those melancholy notes that lull but pierce the heart and enslave the soul?

"And all the while I stand in doubt, and above me is cast the shadow of a laboring cloud, all heavy with thunder and rain, and I feel my thoughts benumbed and mute in presence of thy vast expanse. What does that indefinable, unbounded expanse foretell? Are not schemes to be born as boundless as thyself, who art without limit? Are not deeds of heroism to be achieved where all is ready, open to receive the hero? And threateningly the mighty expanse surrounds me, reflecting its terrible strength within my soul of souls and illumining sight with unearthly power."

The consummate art with which Gogol has exposed the emptiness of peasants' lives is most apparent in the skill with which he fixes our attention exclusively

on the one instance of activity that interrupted the monotony of their existence. The beginning, middle and end of one story is a quarrel about a gun; the beginning, middle and end of another is the purchase of a new clock. And in nothing does the debasing insignificance of their aims and ideas stand forth more prominently than in this exceptional effort, forming, as it were, the crisis of their lives.

The Revisor.

And so it is with Gogol's *The Revisor*, called in our English translation *The Inspector*. By limiting its action to that moment in the life of the prefect when he was aroused to activity by the fear of having the numerous misdeeds of his official career brought to light, he has emphasized the pettiness and trivialities of an existence that ignored the higher necessities and obligations of human nature. The expected visit and the arrival of the dreaded revisor form the sole idea of the piece, because in this one event, as in a focus, is concentrated the whole life of the prefect. When we are first introduced to him, he has already assembled the officials of the district to acquaint them with the alarming news he has just received from a well-informed friend that a government commissioner "is on his way from St. Petersburg, travelling incognito and with secret instructions. During the whole time he has been in office there has been no such inspection on the part of the authorities; but the times are sadly changed; officials are no longer allowed to be bribed,

magistrates are expected to administer justice impartially; any little discrepancies in the yearly accounts, which, even when the greatest care is exercised, may occur, are visited with exile to Siberia, and the new-fangled notions of "Voltairean reformers" have effectually robbed government posts of the profitable advantages they once enjoyed.

There is no need here to summarize this most humorous play, in which each successive scene plunges the chief participants deeper and deeper in ridiculous complications. Turn to the translation in this volume, and enjoy the rich treat and keen satire which have rendered Gogol's name a household word throughout Russia.

"In *The Revisor*," says Belinsky, "there is no one scene that we can declare to be better than another; for throughout, from beginning to end, it is conceived in the truest spirit of genuine comedy." Those who have read the play fully endorse the critic's verdict. "His aim in writing it," says another critic, "was to drag into light all that was bad in Russia and hold it up to contempt. And he succeeded in rendering both contemptible and ludicrous the official life of Russia, the corruption universally prevailing throughout the civil service, the alternate arrogance and servility of men in office."

Dead Souls.

The same motives of protest against a flagrant evil induced Gogol to write his great novel, *Dead Souls*. The hero of the story is an adventurer who goes about the country making fictitious purchases of "dead souls,"

that is, serfs who have died since the last census, with the view of selling their services to the government, and recovering a large sum for their loss. But his adventures are merely an excuse for drawing a series of pictures of an unfavorable kind of Russian provincial life and of introducing on the scene a number of types of Russian society. Of the force and truth of these delineations we have sufficient evidence in the universal approval of Russian critics.

VI.

Tolstoi.

A hundred miles due south of Moscow, on the old highway to the Crimea, amid a gently undulating country of alternating field and forest, lie the village and estate of Yasnaya Polyana, or Fairfield, the home of the Tolstois. The estate, which now includes about 2,500 acres, has been considerably increased since it was given by the Empress Catherine to General Tolstoi, a son of the first count, who was Peter's ambassador to Turkey. In the old days it was surrounded by a castellated rampart, but now it has a neglected aspect, seeming the domain of fallen grandeur. It is a white, two-story building of stuccoed brick, a roomy and unpretentious abode, having a broad veranda, with rude carvings of horses and birds on the railings.

Tolstoi's Father.

Such is the birthplace of Count Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoy, or, as we call him, Leo Tolstoi—the day being August 28th, 1828 — and here he spent the greater part of his life. His father, Count Nicholas Tolstoi, had served in a regiment of hussars, was made prisoner by

the French in the campaign of 1812, and afterward retired with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was a fair specimen of the old Russian nobility—handsome, good-natured and happy-go-lucky. His son thus describes him in *Childhood and Youth*:

“He was a man of the last century, and, like all his contemporaries, he had in him something chivalrous, enterprising, self-possessed, amiable, a passion for pleasure. He felt a great contempt for the present generation. His two great passions were cards and women. In the course of his life he had gained or lost millions at cards, and he had been in love with innumerable women of all classes. A well-shaped and dignified figure, a rather strange gait, a habit of shrugging the shoulders, small eyes which always looked as if he was smiling, a large aquiline nose, irregular lips, a sort of lisp, and a bald head—such is my father as I remember him. Though he had never belonged to the highest circles of society, he had always kept the best company, and always been held in esteem. His disposition was one of those which require spectators in order to do a good deed, and he esteemed only what was esteemed by others. It is difficult to say whether he had any moral convictions. His life was so full of all kinds of impulse that he had not time to think about convictions, and in his happiness did not feel it necessary to do so.”

Tolstoi's Mother.

Very different is the idea Tolstoi gives us of his mother. She died when he was too young to grasp ex-

ternal traits; but through the mist of his worshipful recollections we catch a glimpse of a much more attractive personality; and it is clearly from her side that he received his chief endowment.

"When I try to recall to mind my mother as she was then, only her brown eyes arise before me, always the same look of love and kindness in them; the little mole on her neck, a little lower than the little curls at the back of her neck; her embroidered white collar; her dry, soft hand, which caressed me so often, and which I loved to kiss. When my mother smiled, her face grew prettier, and all looked bright around her. If during the most trying moments of my life I could have caught a glimpse of her smile, I should not have known what grief is."

Childhood.

Childhood, written when Tolstoi was twenty-four years of age, is in essence an autobiography of a very original and wonderful kind; even if we did not know that it was written while youth and memory were still fresh, there is evidence of its authenticity in every chapter. The happy boyish years pass before us like a panorama as we read these long, but never wearisome, and often picturesque pages. We see a patriarchal home, with its multitude of servants—the major-domo, the faithful old German tutor, the steward, valet, man-nurse, maid-servants, the sisters' governess, a dependent idiot lad, Natalia, the old serf who was insulted at the offer of emancipation, coachmen, huntsmen and a hazy background of peasants in bright cotton dresses, work-

ing in the fields or gathered to watch the family coach taking father and children for a visit to Moscow.

His mother's death ended the idyll of childhood; and henceforth, at least until middle age, there is a deepening note of morbidness in his thoughts and acts. If there is anything of stoical self-possession in the older Tolstoi, it has only been achieved after long and painful study.

Life in Moscow.

The youth awoke into a new and altogether less pleasant life in the aristocratic circle of his maternal grandmother in Moscow—Frenchified Russians and Russified Germans for the most part, indolent and conceited. There was a momentary feeling of expansion: "For the first time I saw that our family were not the only beings in the world, that all the interest of life did not turn upon us alone, but that there existed another life, that of people who had nothing in common with us, who did not care or trouble themselves about us, and that many had not even an idea of our existence." But the sensitive lad was now to learn how great a solitude there may be in a large family amidst a great city, and what it means to be "always alone in the search for the good." His father became less and less to him; his sister and her friends began to have their own secrets and aims; the elder brother, who remained his favorite to his death, had also his own occupations; his new tutor, a French prig, inspired detestation; almost every one else was too old or otherwise too far removed for comradeship. He was thrown more and more back upon himself, and

with himself he was by no means in love. His plainness of feature was always a cause of torment to his strained and brooding mind.

"I was often under the influence of despair. I fancied that there could be no more happiness in the world for a man with such a large nose, such thick lips and small gray eyes as I had. I prayed for some miracle that would transform me into a handsome man. I was bashful by nature, but my bashfulness was increased by a conviction of my plainness. I feel convinced that nothing has as powerful an influence upon a man's manners as his outward appearance, and not so much his appearance, even, as his conviction of its being attractive or the reverse. I could not say that my face was expressive, intelligent or noble-looking. There was nothing expressive in it—the most ordinary, gross and unsightly features; and my small gray eyes, especially when I looked into the mirror, seemed rather stupid than clever; there was nothing manly about me; though I was not stout of stature, and was very strong for my age, all my features were soft, flat and meaningless. And there was nothing noble-looking in me; on the contrary, my face was like that of an ordinary peasant. I had large feet and hands, and at that time I felt ashamed of them."

At the University.

After the father's sudden death in 1837, the family was taken in charge first by his sister, the countess Alexandra Osten-Saken, and in 1840 by a relative of his

mother, Pelagia I. Yushkova, who lived in Kazan. He entered the university of Kazan in 1843. He describes at length his preliminary examinations, his chums, his visits to grand relations. Impervious to the ambitions of scholarship and research, unimpressed by the provincial aristocracy, too nice to enjoy the rough revels of the students, and repelled alike from aristocrats, professors and students by an unsocial disposition, he seems to have had during these two or three years an unhappy and unprofitable experience. His highest ideal, save during occasional spasms of humiliation, he describes as consisting, "first, in speaking French well; secondly, in keeping the nails long, well shaped and clean; thirdly, in knowing how to bow, to dance and to converse; lastly, in maintaining a perfect indifference to everything and a constant expression of exquisite contemptuous weariness."

After he left the university, against the pleas of rectors and professors, without graduating, he went back to the old country home, which passed to him in the division of the family property. He was passionately fond of music, and spent months in breaking in his thick fingers. He revelled in French fiction—Sue, Dumas, Paul de Kock—dramatizing every scene in his mind and always enjoying the *éclat* of the great heroes. But nature played freely upon his impressionable mind.

Literary Tendencies.

Tolstoi's instinctive trend, like the historic rôle of his countrymen, has been in the direction of a new syn-

thesis of the Eastern and Western spirits. Social circumstances gave him his first impulsion away from city life in the midst of the peasantry, and showed the impossibility of political activity. They helped to form from the beginning a non-political and even anti-political bias. When a choice of parties was presented to him, in the early fifties, he deliberately evaded it, and gradually struck out a middle line of his own, drawing thereto, as with the loadstone of genius, much of ultra-Russian as well as Western thought.

The extravagances of neo-Byzantinism only repelled him. He hungered after a native and personal revelation, but one which at the same time would go down to the deep things common to all men; that would bring health not only to himself, but to those old friends Ivan Ivanovitch and Natalia the serf. Moscow was to him little more than the seat of an effete aristocracy and the mausoleum of the early tzars. All his young sympathies were toward the liberal and even radical side. The later Nihilists grudged Tolstoi to religion, and Tolstoi grudged Tourgenieff to art. If Tourgenieff has revealed Russia to the West, Tolstoi has revealed Russia to itself. And in the central stage of this struggle for a better social state—the “going among people” to learn and teach—Tolstoi, in his own fashion, may claim to have led the vanguard of the Russian youth.

Military Career.

Such being his environment, it goes almost without saying that the vapors of youthful romanticism were

soon dispelled. One of his first short stories, *A Russian Proprietor*, tells the disappointments and discouragements which the young prince Nekliudoff meets when, having left the university without graduating, he begins to try to carry out all manner of fine plans for the improvement of the condition of his serfs. This was evidently a reminiscence of Tolstoi's own life at Fairfield between his student and his soldier days, and suggests a reason for the next step. A home visit of his elder brother Nicholas, then a captain of artillery serving at one of the outposts in the Caucasus, gave Leo the desired opportunity for a military career, and in 1851 he joined the same regiment as cadet or ensign.

For two years Tolstoi threw himself with complete abandon into this strange experience, fought lustily when the Circassian tribesmen became troublesome, entered fully into the life of the little Cossack post on the Terek river, lost heavily at cards, hunted with the rugged mountaineers, and fraternized with their women and children. About this Olympus of Russian poetry the need to write grew with the growth of physical vigor and the intensity of the mental solitude. After beginning *Childhood and Youth*, he wrote *The Cossacks* and three short stories—*The Invaders*, *The Woodcutting Expedition* and *Meeting an Old Acquaintance*.

We know little more of Tolstoi's life during the Crimean war than is told in his three sketches whose theme is Sevastopol. First appearing separately in a radical magazine, they were published in book form in 1856, and at once made their author's fame. There is little doubt that this harsh experience not only nipped

in the bud his romantic tendencies and his false heroics, but finally determined the line of his after-development. It gave him an abiding horror of war, an abiding suspicion of thoughtless patriotism, a sheaf of ghastly memories of butchery and death. The Crimean war was a costly blunder for England and a severe strain on Russia. Yet it brought a blessing to that empire by putting an end to a régime of brutal, ignorant conservatism and awaking a new national hope.

To a man like Tolstoi the very heart of the Crimean tragedy was the torture of the conscript serf, who had no real or intelligent interest in the long, bloody war. Yet, more graphic pictures of war have never been painted than those which are contained in his Sevastopol sketches. Their special truth is not alone for his own time and country, but just as necessary for the nations which, while flattering themselves upon a further advance in education and self-government, have converted Europe into an armed camp, and have carried examples of hate and violence to the uttermost ends of the earth.

The end of the war, the death of Nicholas and the accession of his son, Alexander II, were the signs of a brief revival of the intellectual activity in which Tolstoi, now in touch with the leading literary and artistic circles of the capital, at once became prominent. He has described in his fragment, *The Decembrists*, both the excitant effect of the war upon Russian society and his own welcome at its hands. The mere fact that he planned a novel on the subject of the revolt of 1825 illustrates his rebel sympathies, as well as the hopeful.

ness that beat in every Russian heart on the morning of the new reign.

Dissipation.

Besides his phases of mind and temper, Tolstoi was moved by the exigencies of a personal problem. There is no day so pure and so bright but the bitter taste of last night's sins will rise in the mouth and kill the savor of the best of things. In his thirtieth year the half of Tolstoi's soul still lay dormant; art alone does not suffice to keep a life clean, especially when the art has been recognized and taken to the unclean bosom of the world. His condition is described in the following passage from *My Confession*:

"I was young, I had passions, and I stood alone, altogether alone, in my search after virtue. Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions, I was praised and encouraged. My kind-hearted aunt, a really good woman, used to tell me that there was one thing above all others which she wished for me—an intrigue with a married woman. Another of her wishes for my happiness was that I should become an adjutant, and, if possible, to the emperor. The greatest happiness of all for me, she thought, would be that I should find a wealthy bride, who would bring me as her dowry an enormous number of serfs.

"I cannot recall these years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I killed men in war, I lost at cards, wasted the substance wrung from my peasants,

deceived men and rioted with loose women. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence and murder—I committed all; and yet I was none the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man.

“Such was my life during ten years. In that time I began to write out of vanity, love of gain and pride. At twenty-six years of age, on the close of the war, I came to St. Petersburg and made the acquaintance of the authors of the day. I met with a hearty reception and much flattery. The prejudices and views of life common to these writers resulted, under the influence of the dissipation into which I plunged, in a theory of life which justified it. It was that life is a development, and the principal part in that development is played by ourselves, the thinkers; while among the thinkers the chief influence is again due to ourselves, the poets. Our vocation is to teach mankind. I wrote and taught I know not what. For doing this I received large sums of money, I kept a splendid table, had an excellent lodging, associated with loose women and received my friends handsomely; moreover, I had fame. But in the second, and especially in the third year of this way of life, I began to doubt the infallibility of such doctrine, and to examine it more closely. I grew disgusted with mankind and with myself, and I understood that this belief which I had accepted was a delusion. Still I called myself a thinker, a poet, a teacher. My self-confidence in teaching what I did not know amounted almost to insanity. Hundreds of laborers worked day and night setting up type and printing millions of pages to be spread by the post all over Russia; and still we

continued to teach, unable to teach enough, angrily complaining the while that we were not listened to."

After his military service, Tolstoi settled down to the uneventful life of a literary man, his chief and almost his only distractions being such as were caused by the management of his estate, in which he was greatly assisted by his wife. The years passed smoothly and swiftly, each one adding to his fame, until he was recognized as the greatest writer of his age. His philosophical and religious works, written after reaching middle age, were those on which he set most store; but the public preferred his narrative volumes, and *Anna Karenina* has probably a hundred readers where *My Religion* has one.

The Year of Famine.

Until extreme old age, Tolstoi's literary work was never long interrupted, except in the famine year of 1891. His love for the common people always usurped a considerable portion of his time and means and strength; but on this occasion, though enthusiastically engrossed with a work which was also of great importance to him, he cast it aside without hesitation, and passed several months in the famine district, in order to alleviate the misery of the sufferers. By his own exertions he founded more than two hundred soup kitchens, travelling to and fro over the snow-drifts, from village to village, through blinding storms and Arctic cold. His appeals for aid received responses from every direction, including foreign lands, for all knew that they

were sending their contributions to trustworthy hands. Yet this was but a drop in the ocean of the people's needs. Thousands must be refused, and it became necessary to make a choice among the starving. In this crisis Tolstoi did all that man could do. In spite of his endurance, he was sometimes so fatigued that he could scarcely express the simplest thought.

Tolstoi's Fate.

Such was Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoi, of whom we now speak as belonging to the past, for his life-work is ended. He was one of the great ones of the world—great as a writer, great as a philosopher and great, above all, as a man. Of him the mighty empire of Russia might well be proud, for through him she was able to speak in clearest tones words of cheer and warning to the inmost heart of all mankind. In his religious works he repeated and enforced the original teachings of Jesus and the primitive Christians. Yet this inspired prophet of eastern Europe was publicly rejected by both State and church of his native land. The State threatened banishment; the Orthodox Church excommunicated him as a heretic and apostate. He was thus despised and rejected at the very time when his weighty messages were eagerly listened to by the entire civilized world.

Tolstoi's Works.

The literary life of Tolstoi divides itself into three periods, or, as it might more aptly be said, into three

phases, and while he was not a dramatist, notwithstanding his strong dramatic powers, writing only three plays, and these of no great merit, we may pass in review some of his more important works, not a few of which have served as the basis for dramatization. He began by writing reminiscences or illustrations of his own personal impressions, as in the *War Sketches*, *Childhood and Youth* and *The Cossacks*, in all of which he confines himself to narration. Perhaps his youthful talent is best known in the romance entitled *Kazaki*, which, as Turgenihiff truly says, is "an incomparable picture of men and things in the Caucasus."

The second period, that of ripe age, is filled chiefly by the two great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. In these the writer's manner has considerably broadened, and even the framework of the fictions has taken an almost exaggerated aspect. *War and Peace* occupies no less than eighteen hundred pages. *Anna Karenina* first appeared as a serial, not in the course of months, but of years. Between the two parts the author stopped, as though he had lost interest in his work; but the public had not lost interest, and when, after more than half a year, the narrator resumed the broken thread of his story, his readers found themselves, as it were, dazzled by the return of the brilliant characters of the romance after this long eclipse.

In the productions of this second period, argument forces its way under cover of fiction. Thus, in *Anna Karenina*, which is the story of an adultery, Tolstoi not only presents us with an accurate picture of aristocratic customs in Russia, and shows as the centre, the

point of fascination in this picture, the subtle and penetrating study of a soul wounded by love, the wound of which becomes more and more painful under the effect of the worriments following her first fault; but it is also a statement and a peculiar solution of certain problems in the social order. Tolstoi wished to express his opinions about marriage, separation, divorce, celibacy and unions of the sexes freely agreed upon and religiously maintained.

War and Peace, likewise, is a sort of semi-military, semi-domestic story; it is a broad vision of Russian life, and especially of aristocratic life, whether in the camps or the residences of the proprietors during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and especially at the time of Napoleon's invasion. Within this ample scope the author expresses his theories on military art, on war and peace, his philosophic doctrine of destiny and his religious fatalism. Some of the characters in *War and Peace* seem to give a prophetic hint of the dogma which Tolstoi adopted later.

These two works of Tolstoi's second period show a power and brilliancy that are truly Shakespearean. If his teaching at this time encroaches on the romance, still he understood marvellously well how to use that means for dissemination. Later the mysticism, traces of which are found in these works, developed in their author to such a degree as to make him look upon a novel as an object of scandal. He renounced the inventions of romance; he sacrificed fiction, which now he calls licentious; he would not take up the pen except to perform the work of a teacher or evangelist; he

wrote *My Confession, My Religion, the Commentary on the Gospels*. Of these three works, which illustrate Tolstoi's third manner, the first is especially interesting.

In *War and Peace* the main object of the author is to show us Russia as she was at the time of the Napoleonic wars, to reflect his nation in all its conditions as it appeared at that eventful period, not omitting the question of serfdom. Everything that is Russian is dear to Tolstoi, and because it is Russian. With the weaknesses of his countrymen he deals lightly, and in his eyes suffering and crime are very small matters, concerning which it is not necessary to disturb one's self. His views are akin to those shown in the old Greek plays, in which the faults and afflictions of the heroes are recognized as only the results of the immutable will of the gods. After his own fashion Tolstoi is a fatalist.

An older member of the Tolstoi family, Count Alexis Constantinovich, born at St. Petersburg in 1817, was of literary note. He entered the diplomatic service, and took part in the Crimean war as a volunteer. Afterward he held a high position at court until his death in 1875. He had no sympathy with his cousin's religious and social views, but was a typical Russian nobleman. His chief literary work was the dramatic trilogy *The Death of Ivan the Terrible, Tsar Fedor Ivanovich and Tsar Boris*. They relate to that striking period of Russian history which has already been described in connection with Pushkin's dramas. To the same period belongs his single novel, *Prince Serbrianyi*. Another of his dramas is on the familiar subject of Don Juan.

The appearance of Tolstoi's ANNA KARENINA, 1877, was greeted with applause from one end of Russia to the other. From the culpable but lofty hearts of the two lovers, Karenina and Vronsky, the author draws the most powerful lesson from their moral torment.



His ballads and lyric poems are highly esteemed in Russia.

Anna Karenina.

The appearance of *Anna Karenina*, in 1877, was greeted with applause from one end of Russia to the other. It proved to be the most popular of Tolstoi's works. The romance is the history of an adulterous amour, and the climax of the amour is suicide. But this suicide is not to be considered as a moral penalty, nor a species of divine judgment; for the author seems to have wished to forestall such interpretation of his narrative. There are in the romance other criminal amours, and it is without any sign of punishment that the wholly immoral relationship between the princess Betsy and her lover leads them to scandalous conduct. On the other hand, the passion which unites Anna Karenina and Vronsky is a sincere, profound, almost solemn passion, in spite of the illegality of their behavior. The hearts of these two lovers are culpable but lofty. Besides, the more sympathy the author shows in their presentation the more powerful is the lesson which he desires to draw from their moral torment. All the plan and all the interest of the work are here. What agonies of remorse this illegal union, so passionately desired, brings upon the guilty woman! What deep mortifications and what vulgar discomfitures, what deadly humiliations and what prosaic irksomeness spring from this false situation, and ultimately make it so odious, so painful, that way of escape

has to be found by an act of madness in a moment of despair.

The Power of Darkness.

Much of Tolstoi's time, as well as a liberal share of his means, was devoted to the common people. For him it was impossible to refuse to see a peasant, to give him alms, to decline to write, when needed, a petition to the court. On one occasion, while suffering grievous pain from an accident, he assisted a widow to harvest her grain, though barely able to walk. But the pain increased, and, without his knowledge, his wife went to Moscow and returned with a physician, who declared that another day's delay might cause the loss of his leg. Thus he was compelled to take to his bed, remaining there for several weeks, during which he wrote, or for the most part dictated, the play entitled *The Power of Darkness*. None of his works came to him so easily, because he had already prepared himself for the task by laboring in the fields and chatting with the peasants. In truth, whatever his mood or condition, Tolstoi never tired of writing. "I have work for a hundred years," he once exclaimed, "and I have but a few months to live." Yet he was not a rapid writer, and when written, his manuscript was very far from being completed. The proofs, when returned to the printer, were found to be covered with erasures and interpolations between the lines, at the sides, at the bottom, or wherever space could be found, together with transfers to other pages. The corrected proofs suffered the same fate, as often did a third set, some chapters being rewritten ten or a

dozen times. It was not that he cared for finely finished diction, which, as he said, was apt to "dry up thought and injure the impression." Clearness was what he sought for in his scenes and characters, and, as he would observe, "Gold is only obtained by strenuous sifting and washing." As corrections and revisions proceeded, some details stood forth more clearly, while others seemed to withdraw further and further into the background. When, at length, a certain degree of lucidity was obtained, he would read his work aloud to a circle of intimates, in order that he might benefit by their criticisms. This he did with his play, reading it to the peasants, though he does not appear to have gained anything by their suggestions; for some of his hearers began to laugh at the most touching parts, where the author expected tears. But perhaps his severest critic was his wife, who fearlessly expressed her opinion, her husband sometimes agreeing with her and sometimes stoutly defending his own position.

The Power of Darkness was first presented at the Little theatre, Moscow, in the winter of 1886, and was at least a succès d'estime. Returning home from a visit on the night of the performance, Tolstoi found a crowd of students around the gates of his house. "We have come," they said, "to express to you our profound gratitude for *The Power of Darkness*." Entering the vestibule a few minutes later, one of them mounted a chair, and in an agitated voice addressed a greeting to the author, the others darting forward to kiss his hands. Tolstoi was so agitated that for several minutes he was unable to speak. It is probable that the success of the

drama was due rather to sentiment than merit; for the theme is a most repulsive one, and its effect is further increased by the intensity of the writer's realism. To witness the details of village criminality can hardly be profitable to those who were responsible for such conditions, while the display of dire social diseases, of squalor and bestiality, could not but deepen the gloom of every one interested in the problems of Russian life.

More to the people's taste was the *Fruits of Enlightenment*, produced in 1889 as a comedy in four acts, forming a half-humorous revelation of middle-class follies and vices. The scene of the first act is in the hall of a town house, where a group of peasants, who have come up from the country to arrange for the purchase of land, is placed in contrast with the sons of the master, who discuss spiritualism and other banalities. Meanwhile, the servants vary the routine of work with practical joking, and the mistress, who has a horror of dirt and microbes, comes downstairs and sweeps the peasants out of doors. The second act takes place in the kitchen, where the ejected visitors have taken refuge, and gives the servants' point of view. The remaining scenes describe, with dry humor and an amusing imitation of mediumistic jargon, an old-fashioned hypnotic séance, and the play ends with something like a farce, of rather ingenious construction.

Kreutzer Sonata.

In his sixtieth year Tolstoi wrote the much-abused novel, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which in the form of a

story culminating in the murder of an unfaithful wife, is a terrific exposure of the degradation of woman to serve man's sensuality which is commonly sanctioned throughout society, and the depravity of marriage founded not on harmony of affections and ideals, but on fleshly and "romantic" passions. The story itself is well balanced, the language temperate, the characters speak like men and women we meet in daily life, mixtures of truth and falsehood fused by the selfishness of bitter individual experience. The assassin tells his tale in a railway train during a long Russian journey, one of the most natural stages for such a meeting of types and such a confession. The transactions of the marriage market; the training of children for a perverted life; the centring of art upon the production of bodily charm, "toys for man's pleasure;" the customary masculine license and the inequality of shameful results; the religious, poetic and social laudation of legal concubinage; the tragedy of incompatible tempers aggravated by jealousy and hate; the last abandonment of lust and betrayal of wifehood and motherhood—the revelation of the awful evil and hypocrisy of all this proceeds with the fearless, merciless sureness of a demonstration in anatomy. There are some exaggerations, but there is no extravagance.

It was not over *The Kreutzer Sonata*, but over the "postscript" and the supplementary essay on *The Relation of the Sexes*, that serious controversy arose; and then the question was whether Tolstoi's ultra-Puritanism has support in the facts and capacities of human nature. For in these later papers we are wafted away

from the gross realities of this present state to that ideal time and clime of which prophets have spoken, where there will be no more marrying and giving in marriage, and when, the service of the flesh being ended, humanity will be ready for its translation.

The main argument is to cleanse sex affection from animalism. Probably as to some concrete points Tolstoi himself is indeterminate; in *Work While Ye Have the Light* he reasserts his old view of the right family life through the lips of the Christian Pamphilius, who is made to say to Julian: "Never again utter those terrible words that a Christian life is possible for those only who are childless. On the contrary, one might say that to lead the life of a pagan is excusable only in those who are without children."

It has been remarked that Tolstoi's works, previous to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, contain no feminine figures. But thenceforward they come in crowds, and all of them are charming. This pleasure we owe, no doubt, to the author's marriage and to the influence of his wife, Sophia Andreevna. But is it not strange that in his second great novel the author should have made a vulgar incident of adultery the foundation and starting-point of his theory of social renovation?

Religious and Philosophical Works.

Tolstoi's religious and philosophical productions may be passed over in the briefest of phrase. When, in the two books entitled *My Confession* and *My Religion*, he pointed out the origin of his teaching, and laid its foun-

dations, he undertook two huge works—one a thorough criticism of dogmatic theology and the other a new translation of the Four Gospels. The spirit in which he approached this mighty task finds ingenuous expression in the following passage from *My Religion*: “It was long before I could accustom myself to the idea that after eighteen centuries, during which the law of Jesus had been professed by thousands of human beings—after eighteen centuries, during the course of which thousands of men have consecrated their lives to the study of that law—I should myself have discovered it as some new thing.”

A perusal of *My Religion* leads almost to the conclusion that Tolstoi, following the example of Dostoievski, has reduced the teaching of Christ to five commandments—“Never fall into a rage,” “Do not commit adultery,” “Take no oath,” “Use no violence in self-defense,” and “Make no war”—and that from these he has deduced the necessity for the almost wholesale destruction of existing social institutions, with their constituent elements—justice, army, taxes and so forth. This, too, would appear to be the explanation of *Resurrection*, the subject of which story—wherein we see a man called to sit on a jury and condemn a woman who has been his own mistress, whom he has forsaken, and thus driven into a life of vice—is said to have been suggested to Tolstoi by M. Koni, the criminal expert. The author’s conclusion is that juries, as well as every species of legal tribunal, should be suppressed.

Tolstoi still showed the highest mastery of his craft in those novels and tales with which he occasionally

broke the series of his philosophical treatises and exegetical works, and in all of which the same teaching, though under a different form, is carefully instilled. He was too apt, indeed, to forget the precept which was Goethe's legacy to all artists: "Depict, but do not speak!"

Popular Stories.

The *Popular Stories*, which were at one time Tolstoi's own favorite works, have been somewhat severely judged by Russian critics. They have complained that the author has failed to attain the simplicity at which he aimed, and certainly their artlessness appears somewhat artificial. One of the last tales published before *Resurrection* received, under the title of *Master and Workman*, a more kindly verdict. It embodies the antique teaching of the vanity of riches. A timber merchant—rough, coarse and hard-hearted—goes to the forest with his man, loses his way and is caught in a snow storm. He unharnesses the horse, mounts it and rides away, leaving his humble companion to his fate. The horse, failing to find its way through the tempest, brings him back to the sledge on which the workman is huddled, already stiff with cold and half-buried with snow. With a rush the uselessness of the cowardly attempt he has just made to save his own life, and the vanity of his past efforts to accumulate riches, which at such a moment have lost all value in his eyes, surge over the merchant's soul, sweep away the artificial layer of selfishness, and stir his underlying instinct of altruism and sympathy for his neighbor. His sole idea, now, is

to bring back warmth, with his fur coat and with his own body, to the poor wretch to whom he had not given a thought a little while ago. He stretches himself upon his body, and there, a few hours later, he is found in the same posture; he has brought his last undertaking to a successful issue. Death has come to him, indeed, but the workman is alive.

In Tolstoi's drama, *The Power of Darkness*, we recognize one of the masterpieces of literature. In it he seems to have created a new form of popular drama, and one capable of universal application. The idea that a fault may be atoned for by a voluntary confession and expiation is certainly not a new one. But none of Tolstoi's predecessors has succeeded in expressing it in so dramatic a fashion, nor with so much true and simple grandeur. He gives us nature herself, as she still lives and moves, taken from the rustic life, without the smallest affectation or the slightest touch of rhetoric. Figures and surroundings, methods of speech and ways of feeling, have all been observed, noted even to their most delicate shades, and rendered in a fashion that is almost miraculous. Though Nikita, the guilty peasant, speaks the ordinary language of the populace, he uses some phrases and expressions which reveal his knowledge of circles other than those of his own village.

Artist and Preacher.

By the majority of critics Tolstoi the artist is preferred to Tolstoi the preacher; but it is not so with his followers. By most of them he is revered as one of the

greatest of teachers, because he preaches the gospel of love, because he shows that only by love can man be truly said to live—that man can be truly blessed only when he devotes himself to the service of his fellow-men. In places his logic may be bad, his proof may be faulty. To be skilled in the art of fighting with words is no more essential to a noble soul than to be skilled in the art of fighting with fists. Both can, indeed, knock down an opponent; but knocking down is not the business of life, but raising up. And Tolstoi is especially revered among teachers because he first of all raises up; because he preaches what others who have raised men up for many ages preached; because he preaches what Christ has preached, what Emerson and Carlyle and Ruskin have preached—what will ever continue to be preached so long as there are souls to be uplifted and men capable of the task.

VII.

Recent and Contemporary Literature.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century a sudden stoppage took place in that intellectual current which had previously flowed from eastern to western Europe, and whereby the East had been giving back, under a new form, the ideas drawn from the older source. This system of exchange, in which western Europe certainly found an advantage of its own, has now almost entirely disappeared. The works of Tourgenieff, Dostoievski and Gontcharov are still read by the French, English, Germans and Americans, and Tolstoi's writings continue to find their way throughout the world; but even in these, foreign interest is not so fresh and constant as in former days, while among the writers of the younger generation Tchekhof and Maxim Gorky are almost the only ones whose works have even found admittance to foreign reviews. The rest remain utterly unknown. Have they nothing worth offering? The question has been answered by a far-seeing Russian critic, who says:

"We have grown very poor in the matter of talent. Our intellectual level has fallen; our conception of the

simplest problems of general existence has narrowed. We have no ideal, whether in ethics or æsthetics; utter selfishness, naked and open, to the point of cynicism, reigns supreme in our world of thought."

Among the leading causes of the literary stagnation of this period is the development of industrial enterprise and the sudden rush of almost the whole of the national force in that direction. The prodigies already performed are within general knowledge. The valleys of the Don have been transformed into another Belgium; the steel ribbon of the Trans-Siberian railway rolls its length down to the coasts of the Pacific ocean; Manchuria has been overrun. At the same time—and this is in agreement with the present system of moral pressure—the curriculum of the schools has been modified so as to increase the amount of technical instruction, and the time formerly given to general education has been curtailed; college pupils have no opportunity, now, for writing verses. The statesmen who produced novels and composed plays between two diplomatic missions have died out.

As an unmistakable mark of this decadence, it may be noted that Russian literature now subsists principally on translations. In a book published in 1892, and dealing with this decline, the poet Merechkovski made an effort to lead the younger generation to adopt something like French symbolism, in the hope that in them it might find the elements of a fresh season of springing growth. A few young writers were converted, but they could not catch the public ear. Of the threefold inheritance left us by Pushkin, Gogol and Belinski, the

legacy of the first-named is that which has suffered the most noticeable loss. In an out-of-the-way corner, a sanctuary hemmed about with silence and solitude, a small band of the elect still carries on the worship of which, toward the close of his career, Pushkin had made himself high priest. These exponents of "art for art's sake," as he himself described it, share his ignorance and scorn of the noise of the outside world—the feelings and passions of that general mass which, in its turn, knows naught of the mysteries which they profess.

Recent Novelists.

The favor of the Russian public is now bestowed on another group of novelists, far removed from Tolstoi and his views of morality and art. The lovers of æsthetic delights and the eager reformers of the forties and the sixties have given place to a new generation of readers, whose chief desire is to be amused or startled, and who are not over-particular as to the quality of the work which gives them the desired sensation. Boborikine and Potapienko are among those who best understand how to satisfy this need. The former is a bold follower after prevailing fashions. For a considerable period he published a novel every year, and never failed to touch on the topic of the moment.

Potapienko, whose celebrity only dates from 1891, is a great discoverer of dramatic situations. Generally speaking, he leaves them where he finds them. Occasionally he shows a philosophic intention. His story called *Sins* is a rather coarse exposure of the hypocriti-

cal virtue of a father before the artless eyes of his children, as following up the furrow traced in the pictures of Tolstoi. These two observers of life succeed only in bringing together a succession of tiny facts and faint impressions, instead of vivid pictures.

Tchekhof.

The star of this school is Tchekhof, who has hitherto proved himself a first-rate artist in an inferior style. *The Melancholy Tale* revealed a most successful search after simplicity, a natural gift for fitting his form to his subject, and an inclination to coarse humor. In a collection of tales published later, the young writer's range of vision appeared to be raised and widened. He touched on psychological conflicts in *The Sorceress* and *Agatha*, and even on social problems in *The Enemies* and *The Nightmare*, elements in the drama of existence which he had hitherto seemed to ignore. The vague hints, the hasty abridgments, of which the author makes use, were accepted, at that time, as an ingenious artifice, deliberately employed. But on this point Tchekof's admirers were soon undeceived.

The Melancholy Tale has been the most successful of his numerous works. Its two chief personages are of absolutely different character and condition, the man a savant, the woman an actress, whom chance has thrown together, but who are still more closely bound by their common sense of the vanity of life, and whose communion leads them, on parallel lines, one to loathe his science and the other to loathe her art. Such partner-

ships are not often made, and their results, as presented to us by Tchekhof, are not conclusive, for Katia, the actress, has no talent, and her protector strikes us as being a thorough simpleton. In the course of the book, the author makes an attack upon modern Russian literature. The savant reads nothing in his leisure time but French novels; they do not altogether satisfy him, but they are less tiresome than those published in Russia, and, at all events, they contain the essential element of all artistic creation—that sentiment of individual liberty of which not a trace remains in the Russian writers of recent years.

Tchekhof also wrote for the stage, publishing the drama of *Ivanov*, a comedy, *The Seagull*, and several other pieces, none of which have been successful. The two indispensable factors in any work intended for the stage, action and the development of character, are just those in which his stories are deficient. Clearness is indispensable in dramatic writing, and Tchekhof cannot cast off his twilight manner. Does he conceive his *Ivanov* to represent the young generation, which sets to work furiously at twenty, and seems worn out by its exertions before it reaches the age of thirty? *Ivanov* marries a rich Jewess for the sake of her fortune, and consoles himself for the inevitable disappointments she causes him, by seducing a Christian girl. The twofold performance leaves him so overwhelmed with debt, gray hairs and hypochondria, that he shoots himself just as he is about to lead a second bride to the altar. The real meaning of this conclusion is an enigma. That of the *Seagull* is similar, and odd as applied to comedy.

Everywhere in the author's early tales and stories we behold the same strange assemblage of neurotics, lunatics and semi-lunatics: well-born girls, rich and pretty, who suddenly, no one knows why, lose their heads, cast themselves into the arms of a man they have seen but once, and whom they will certainly leave on the morrow, even if they marry him; young men of twenty, who loathe life already; old men of sixty, who have just found out that existence has no meaning. The society thus brought before us is like a nightmare. All its members are bent on one thing only—the solution of the problem of life. Girls, young men, old men, all study it persistently. What is its meaning? They struggle desperately to find an answer, and suffer and die because none is forthcoming. The truth is that the mind of the world, as modern civilization has made it, is largely occupied, even in Russia, with other subjects, and when Tchekhof takes it to be absorbed by this peculiar anxiety, he is a prey to a fanciful delusion.

VIII.

Poland and Hungary.

The Polish language, with its harshness and its conglomeration of consonants, has always been a stumbling-block to those who would read the literature of Poland in the original. Even the names of the leading authors are almost unknown. Yet the voice of Poland is by no means silent; and a language which is still spoken and cherished by twelve millions of people may have a prosperous future before it.

Until the sixteenth century, Polish literature was almost entirely the work of ecclesiastics, many of whom were foreigners. Few of them could write in classical Latin, but their compositions throw much light upon the events of the time. In their hands was centred all the learning of the age until the founding, in 1400, of the university of Cracow, where Copernicus and other famous Poles received their training. Young men of aristocratic families, however, frequented the universities of Paris, Prague and Padua, and it was only after its reorganization, and the founding of a chair of theology by consent of Pope Boniface IX, that the Cracow institution began to grow in favor. Other universities

were established at Vilna and Zamose, and there were good schools at various places, especially the collegium of Posen.

In 1521, a quarter of a century after the first printing-press was set up, the first complete work was published in the Polish language. Its title was *Speeches of the Wise King Solomon*. Thereafter books multiplied rapidly, but works in the native tongue were rare, Copernicus being the first writer who made himself known beyond the limits of his own country.

The second half of the sixteenth century is considered by the Poles as their golden age. Poland was then the leading country of eastern Europe, and as there was universal toleration in religious matters, Protestantism was widely spread. But its reign was brief; for when the Jesuits made their appearance, the entire religious and educational system of the country passed under their control. Besides exterminating the Protestant sects, they took upon themselves to suppress the Greek church in Lithuania. Latin again came into fashion. Up to this time, with rare exceptions, only religious works had been published in the Polish language.

The first poet of repute who wrote in Polish was Rej of Naglowice, whose best work is a didactic poem entitled *The Life of an Honorable Man*. His *Joseph in Egypt* is a Mystery play, such pieces being common in Poland from an early date. It is of slight interest, except from an antiquarian point of view; it contains little poetry, and is full of anachronisms, mention being made, for instance, of masses, organs and German ser-

vants. The first regular play, *The Dispatch of the Greek Ambassadors*, is a one-act piece with twelve scenes, by Jan Kochanowski, who has been called the prince of Polish poets, and came of a poetical family, his brother, cousin and nephew all contributing to the literature of their country. The drama was acted in 1578, on the occasion of the chancellor's marriage, in the presence of King Stephen and his wife. Kochanowski wrote in Latin as well as in Polish, and this double-sided authorship is found in many other writers. They composed for a learned and exclusive circle, not for the Jewish or German traders of the towns, nor for the illiterate peasant. Though their works are classical in form, the matter is Polish, and there is much national feeling in what they have left.

The disturbed state of the country in the time of Sobko, or Sobieski, can easily be explained by his frequent wars; and it must be acknowledged that the internal condition of Poland was one of complete anarchy. The excesses of a barbarous and selfish aristocracy had reached their height, and all good government was paralyzed.

During the reign of Stanislaus Poniatowski, the last of the Polish kings, there was a second era of development in the literature of Poland. This was the culmination of the French period, and its writers were rather verse-makers than poets, regretting that they were not Frenchmen, and sighing over the barbarism of their country. After the partition came the period of Romanticism, in which there is a national literature, though too often the literature of exile and despair.

So low had Polish literature sunk toward the end of the eighteenth century, that even feeble translations of insipid French poems were in vogue among the people. At this time Wegierski enjoyed a considerable reputation among his countrymen for his dramatic and satirical writings. In an era of great national disaster he was deservedly recognized as a patriot, but he died young. The laureate of the court of Stanislaus Augustus was Trembecki, whose sympathies were too much with the Russian invaders of his country. With these authors the pseudo-classical period may be said to close.

Russian Oppression.

After the threefold annexation by Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1795, the Polish monarchy was at an end. The weak and vacillating Stanislaus Poniatowski was compelled to abdicate, and afterward retired to St. Petersburg, where he spent the rest of his days in obscurity. After the attempted revolution of 1830, Poland had been declared a Russian province. The people were compelled to submit, and the spirit of revolt, which now and then broke out in riots, was for a time appeased by concessions, Alexander II establishing municipal institutions in Warsaw and other large cities. But the riots continued, and coercive measures were again adopted. In 1862 the grand duke Constantine was appointed viceroy of Poland. A few months later a secret conscription was held, and persons suspected of being hostile to the government were dragged from their beds at dead of night and compelled to enlist as

soldiers. The immediate result was an insurrection, attended only with guerilla fighting, in which the Poles showed stubborn heroism. By May, 1864, the outbreak was suppressed. The cost was terrible. Poland ceased to exist as a political division, though as a nation it could not be extinguished even by Russian cruelty and oppression. It was parcelled out into governments; the Russian language was to supplant the Polish in all public documents, in legal proceedings, and to a certain extent in trade; old institutions were supplanted by Russian administration, and the very name of Poland was expunged from official writings. Austrian Poland has been quiet since the massacres of 1846. In Prussian Poland, Germanization is almost complete. Posen has practically ceased to exist as a Polish town, and the names of many historic places have been changed for such substitutes as Sedan and Bismarcksdorf.

Dramatic Literature.

Under such conditions it would seem impossible that literature should flourish; yet in this period of degradation, extending from the fall of the monarchy to our own day, we find that some of the most distinguished of Polish writers have rendered famous an era marked by persecution, by exile and proscription. Foremost among them is Henrik Sienkewicz, the author of several dramas, though better known as a novelist whose works have been extensively dramatized. Of these the chief is *Quo Vadis*, a romantic tale of Nero's persecution of the Christians. Published in 1896, it quickly

achieved a popularity accorded to few productions of the latter years of the nineteenth century. He was first heard of in the United States in 1876, when, with a company led by Madame Modjeska, he attempted to found in California an ideal Polish colony. After its failure he returned to his native country and devoted himself to literature, in which he attained remarkable success. His writings, which consist chiefly of historical romances inspired by patriotic sentiments, have been excellently translated into English by Jeremiah Curtin and others.

Theatres.

A national theatre was founded at Warsaw in 1765, under the auspices of the court; but it was not until long afterward that anything in the nature of a national drama made its appearance in Poland. In tragedy, one of the first productions was *Barbara Radziwill*, an historical piece by Aloysius Felinski. Comedy was best represented by Count Alexander Fredro, both these authors belonging to the nineteenth century. Fredro was the most entertaining dramatist that Poland has produced, the only one, in fact, who has written anything of special merit in this department. Though his works are French in style, the characters are taken from Polish life, and from him dates the formation of a national Polish stage. His youth was spent chiefly in France, where he became a member of the Polish legion of Napoleon, and was in the expedition of 1812. After publishing nearly twenty pieces between 1819 and

1835, some severe criticisms caused him to abandon work; but after his death, at the age of eighty-two, several comedies were issued in a posthumous edition. A Frenchwoman named Marie Louise also did much for the Polish theatre, hiring a troupe of French actors and making the Poles familiar with something resembling the modern stage. There are also fairly good plays by Bahomolec, Kaminski and others.

The principal theatre for the Polish drama and ballet is still at Warsaw. It is a spacious and commodious building—or rather two buildings under one roof—and compares not unfavorably with the leading playhouses of Berlin and Vienna. But the pride of the capital is its theatre in the Lazienki gardens, which were laid out in an old bed of the Vistula by Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, and contain beautiful shady alleys, artificial ponds, a palace with ceilings painted by Bacciarelli, several imperial villas and a monument to Sobieski. An artificial ruin on an island makes an open-air theatre, the stage of which is separated from the auditorium by a channel of water, while the decorations blend with the parks and the palace behind. The Saxon garden, the resort of the Warsaw aristocracy, has likewise its summer theatre, and is richly adorned with statuary, fountains and flowers. Open-air entertainments are also held in the Krasinski and other gardens.

The Hungarian Drama.

The drama of the Magyars belongs almost entirely to the nineteenth century, and outside of Hungary is

little known. Religious plays, known as Moralities, however, were frequently performed at a much earlier date, many of them containing mordant satires against priests and the Catholic church. The first Hungarian drama, *The Marriage of Priests*, published at Cracow in 1550, was in reality an exposition of Protestantism in dramatic form. Until late in the eighteenth century the drama in its proper sense did not exist, though foreign plays were occasionally acted by French and German companies.

Hungarian Drama in the Nineteenth Century,

The dramatic literature of the Hungarians was, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, still in a most backward condition, and it is difficult to assign any reason for the fact of its slow elevation. The first really great drama of a Magyar writer—*Banus Bank*, by Kátóna, produced in 1818—passed with scant notice for sixteen years, until a great actor, Gabriel Egressy, made it popular. Yet the Hungarians are naturally good actors, and very fond of theatre-going. There are many who speak of English and French as the only great dramatic literatures of the modern world; but in Hungary there is a wealth of drama at least as great in intrinsic value as anything in British drama written within the last century, and played by actors and actresses fully the equals of their colleagues at the Comédie Française. This remarkable growth did not, however, begin until near the middle of the nineteenth century. The epics and ballads of Vörösmarty, Garay, Czuczor and others

seemed to captivate the public to the exclusion of all other forms of poetry. The patriotic tone prevailing and expected in all popular works previous to the Revolution of 1848, threw their authors into the worship of the heroic past, and thus into Romanticism. It was, accordingly, quite natural that dramatists, in order to catch the public ear, indulged rather in ranting and tirade than in dramatic characterization. The heroes of Kisfaludy's tragedies, for instance, are merely rhetoric personified. Everything Magyar is perfect; the Magyars are delicately reminded, in pages full of endless adulation, that they are the greatest people of the world; their heroes are the greatest; their past the most glorious. Such exaggerations of patriotism may be tolerated in epic and ballad, where other redeeming features may save the literary value of the work. In drama it is fatal. Yet it is in the drama that Romanticism may come nearest to perfection. The writer of romantic ballads must, in the end, fall into the snares of jingoism, and thus vitiate his work, rendering it offensive to a sober posterity. The dramatist need not run the same risk. If he has power to chisel out of the given material of a nation's past the truly human character in all its grandeur and in all its shortcomings, then the historic staging and atmosphere of the past will serve only to set off the dramatic beauties of the play.

Katona.

To the dramatic poet it is indifferent from what part of the globe he takes his material; for humanity is

spread all over the planet. So a nation's heroic past may be quite welcome to him, provided he is a real dramatist. Katona was such. He is rough and inharmonious in language, but there is real dramatic life in his *Banus Bank*. For the first time in Hungarian literature the true tone of tragedy was heard. The terrible fate of Banus comes home to hearers, Hungarians or otherwise; it is yawning out of the abyss of conflicts to which all of us are liable. He is a loyal subject of his king, and yet bursts out in open rebellion; nay, worse, he kills his queen. He is a great patriot, yet finally makes a rebellious plot with a foreign adventurer. He is a perfect nobleman, yet ultimately breaks the laws of all true nobility. He is a loving husband, yet contemplates assassinating his beautiful wife. And as he is, so are the other persons of the drama. In them are pictured the conflicting nature of the human heart and character as it really is—rough, unbending, false, yet capable of sublime self-abnegation—or, as Petöfi says, "Rain from heaven turning to mud on earth."

The plot is as follows: Bank, in the absence of King Andrew II of Hungary justiciar of the country, has reason to believe that Gertrude, the haughty and unpopular queen, countenances the vile designs of her brother Otto on Bank's beautiful wife Melinda. A rebellion of the malcontent nobles under Petur is breaking out. Bank, who ought to quell it by virtue of his office, is thrown out of his normal equilibrium by the news that Melinda has been seduced by Otto. Forgetful of his position, he obeys only the behests of his outraged soul, and kills Gertrude. The king returns; the rebellion

is put down, and Bank perishes. In Katona's drama there is more power than form, and it is sufficiently apparent that his chief model was Shakespeare. He himself did not live to see the great success of his own masterpiece, for he died, broken-spirited, in 1830, at Kecs-kemet, in the thirty-eighth year of his luckless life.

Szigligeti.

The first remarkable Hungarian dramatist after Katona was Edward Szigligeti, whose real name was Joseph Szatmary. From an early date he was in constant contact with the theatre and with actors, and so acquired great practical knowledge of stage lore. He had deeply studied the art of stage effect, and all his very numerous dramatic works testify to extraordinary skill in stagecraft. It would, however, be unjust to compare him, as some have done, to such writers as Kotzebue in Germany or Labiche in France. Routine, no doubt, was preëminent in many of his pieces; yet, beside and beyond the mere cleverness of the playwright, he had real *vis comica* and a profound knowledge of Hungarian society. During his lifetime that society was slowly but steadily emerging from the semi-civilized state of patriarchalism to the forms and usages of modern life. In such periods of transition there is ample material for any one gifted with a keen sense of humor. The aping of Western manners, as in *Marna* and *Female Rule*, the humor of the altered family life, as in *The Three Matrimonial Commands* and *Stephen Dalos*, with odd remnants of the former social state,

such as tramping actors and the still life of small towns—all this Szigligeti knew how to dramatize with great effect. Like Kisfaludy, he drew with great felicity on the stores of drastic humor pervading a conservative society composed of many a discrepant element and moving onward on entirely new lines of development. He tried his skillful hand at tragedies, too, and *The Shadows of Light* and *The Pretender* possess considerable merit.

Folk-Drama.

Szigligeti's rare stagecraft and witty dialogue alone could not have raised his name to the height on which it rests. He is justly famous as being the real founder of what may be called Hungarian folk-drama. The continental peasantry is generically different from any class of small farmers or farm laborers in England or America. That peasantry is in reality a world of its own, far different from that of society. The whole tone and mode of life of these two worlds are different; they are written not only in different scales, but also for different instruments.

Within recent times it has become sufficiently evident that the Hungarian peasantry lends itself to dramatization in the same way as any other community. Not only is the common humanity of man to be found in that peasantry, but it is modified, colored and discolored, and attuned in a different mood. It admits of tragedies proper, of comedies and of burlesques. It is Szigligeti's great merit to have discovered this new dramatic field; but it must be added that through the great revolution

coming over Hungary, as over the rest of Europe—a revolution social no less than political—the peculiar and distinct character of the world of peasants became, by contrast to the rising bourgeoisie and the changing nobility, much more easily discernible than it had ever before been in Hungary. Szigligeti was the first to seize on that dramatic possibility, and both for the discovery and the excellent specimens of folk-dramas which he wrote, he deserves all credit. Of the latter, the most remarkable are *The Deserter*, *The Csikos* and *The Foundling*.

Charles Hugo.

A passing mention may suffice for the dramas of Sigismund Czako, who for some time before his voluntary death in 1847, was very popular; of Charles Obernyik and of Ignatius Nagy, the two latter being very popular before the Revolution of 1848, owing to their excessively patriotic dialogues. A higher place in dramatic literature is due to Count Ladislas Teleky, who also died by his own hand. In *The Favorite*, the subject of which is taken from the time of the Roman emperor Valentinian III, he displays great force of irony, coupled with dramatic truth and power of imagination. In Charles Hugo the Hungarian drama might have gained a writer of rare quality, had not the overweening self-infatuation of the author, together with his poor knowledge of Magyar, rendered him a victim to his first success. Hugo's *Banker and Baron* had not only a great, but an extraordinary success; an enthusiastic crowd carried the author bodily from the the-

atre to his favorite café. This ovation unhinged the author's mental equilibrium, so that he considered himself a second Victor Hugo, and thus never wrote or attempted to write another great drama. The merit of *Banker and Baron*, however, is very considerable. It was, up to that time, one of the few attempts at writing a real bourgeois drama in which the common human heritage of virtues and vices, affections and passions, is presented with great force and dramatic vivacity.

A. MARRIAGE PROPOSAL

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY

ANTON PAVLOVITCH CHEKHOV.

Translated from the Ferraris edition by

W. H. H. CHAMBERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

IVAN VASILYEVITCH LOMOV.

STEPAN STEPANOVITCH CHEBUKOV.

NATALYA, Daughter of Chebukov.

A Marriage Proposal.

ARGUMENT.

Dressed in a swallow-tail, the hypochondriac Ivan Vasilyevitch Lomov calls one morning upon his neighbor, Stepan Stepanovitch Chebukov, to ask his daughter's hand in marriage. The father is delighted; but, unfortunately, as he calls his daughter, Natalya, he jokingly misleads her as to the visitor and his object in calling; consequently, she, little dreaming that Lomov has called to propose, disputes a trivial statement made by him, whereupon they fall into a quarrel. Chebukov, coming in, is speedily dragged into the dispute; and father and daughter, with bitter taunts, drive Lomov away. "And to think that such a fellow dared to come here with a proposal!" the father exclaims, as Lomov leaves. No sooner does Natalya thus learn the object of his call, than she insists that her father must bring Lomov back to her immediately. The father demurs, but obeys. Upon Lomov's return Natalya humbly acknowledges that she alone was to blame, and tries to lead up to the proposal. The lead is unfortunate, however, and in spite of her ardent desire to bring about the proposal, they are soon involved in another quarrel.

The father, likewise, is dragged into the second dispute, and the mutual taunts grow more and more bitter, until at last Lomov apparently faints. Natalya pronounces him dead and becomes hysterical. But Lomov moves, whereupon the father places his daughter's hand in Lomov's, tells him that she consents, commands them to kiss each other, and—to go to the devil and leave him in peace.

The author of this play, Anton Chekhov, "is universally recognized," to quote a thoroughly competent critic, "as the most powerful living writer in his country after Tolstoi." And this farce was written with serious intent: to castigate, by caricature and exaggeration, some of the characteristic traits of his countrymen.

SCENE 1.

Chebukov and Lomov.

Lomov.—(Enters wearing a dress-suit and white gloves.)

Chebukov.—(Walking towards Lomov.) My dear fellow. Is it really you, Ivan Vasilyevitch?—I'm more than delighted. (Shakes hands warmly.) Well, this is a surprise, my friend—How are you?

Lomov.—Quite well, thanks; and you?

Chebukov.—Oh, so, so, thank you. Sit down my dear fellow and make yourself at home. Apropos, it really isn't just the right thing to forget one's neighbors so, my treasured friend. But why this formal dress—the swallow-tail and white gloves—on your way to some reception?

Lomov.—No; I came out to call here only, most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch.

Chebukov.—Well, then, why the swallow-tail? We've scarcely gotten round to New Year's calls as yet.

Lomov.—Now listen and I'll explain matters. (Takes him by the arm.) I came here most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch to ask a favor of you. On several occasions I have already had the honor of asking you to do me a favor and you have always, so to speak—but, pray pardon me—I'm terribly agitated; I'll just take a swallow of water if you'll permit, most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch. (He drinks.)

Chebukov.—(Aside.) The fellow's come to borrow money; he'll not get it of me. (To Lomov.) Well, what's the trouble, my dear fellow?

Lomov.—Why, you see, most esti— Stepanovitch—excuse me Stepan Estimovitch—that is to say—but I'm so deucedly agitated you know. To cut it short, you alone can do me this favor, although I must confess that I've never done anything to justify the asking—

Chebukov.—Pray don't hesitate any longer, out with it, tell me what's the matter at once. Well?

Lomov.—Yes, I will—I will. I came to beg the hand of your daughter, Natalya Stepanovna.

Chebukov.—(Joyfully.) My dear Ivan Vasilyevitch! Oh, tell me again, tell me again, that I may comprehend it more clearly.

Lomov.—I have the honor to ask—

Chebukov.—(Interrupting.) My dear fellow—I'm so delighted. (Throws his arms round Lomov and kisses him.) By the bye, it's just what I've desired for ever so long. It's been my dream. (Drops a tear.) I have always loved you as if you were my own son. May God bless and make you both happy! But why am I standing here like a wooden man? I can't contain myself for joy. No, I really can't contain myself—I'll go now and call Natasha.

Lomov.—(Deeply moved.) Most estimable Stepan Stepanovitch what do you think, may I hope to win her consent?

Chebukov.—What! such a handsome young fellow and she not consent? Why she must be over head and ears in love with you—I'll send her right in.

SCENE II.

Lomov, alone.

I'm actually shivering—trembling just as I used to tremble before examinations. The essential thing after all, is to come to a determination; whereas with taking too much thought, by vacillating, by talking too much and waiting for the ideal and true-love, one would never succeed in obtaining a wife—B-r-r-r—How I shiver. Natalya Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, not unprepossessing, cultivated—what more could be desired? Meanwhile, my ears are beginning to buzz as a result of this agitation. (He takes a drink.) I must certainly marry. In the first place, I'm already thirty-five, an age, which I may term, critical. Then I really need to lead a regular life—my heart troubles me—continual palpitations—I get all worked-up over trifles and am always agitated. At this very moment my lips tremble and there is a twitching in my left eye brow—but it's most terrible at night when I attempt to sleep. No sooner in bed and dropping off into a doze when suddenly "twitch" in my right side, from whence it passes into my shoulder and from there into my head. I get up like a man that has lost his wits and walk to and fro. But no sooner have I returned to bed than "twitch" in my side again, and so for a score of times or——

SCENE III.

Lomov and Natalya.

Natalya.—(Entering.) Ah! it's you is it? And papa said there was some one awaiting me here to transact some business. Good day, Ivan Vasilyevitch?

Lomov.—Good day, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya.—Pray pardon my apron—we were just shelling peas for drying. Why have you neglected us so long? But pray be seated. (Both sit down.) Won't you have something to eat?

Lomov.—No, thanks; I've already eaten.

Natalya.—Have a smoke then—you can get a light here.—
What a splendid day! Whereas yesterday was so rainy that our laborers could do nothing. How much grass have you had cut? I was so greedy that I had the whole field mowed, and now I fear the weather. It would have been better to have waited. But what's going on? I see you're in full dress. That's something new isn't it? or perhaps you're going to a ball? Really, you're becoming more stylish all the while, but why this special elegance?

Lomov.—(Agitated.) Well, you see, most estimable *Natalya Stepanovna*—I should like you to listen—you certainly will be surprised, possibly made angry, but I— (Aside.) How I shiver!

Natalya.—What do you mean? (A pause.) Well?

Lomov.—I shall try to be brief. You are already familiar with the fact, most estimable *Natalya Stepanovna*, that for a long time, indeed, from early childhood, I have had the honor of being acquainted with your family. My late aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited my property, esteemed very highly both your father and your deceased mother. The *Lomov* family and that of *Chebukov* were always on the very best terms; apart from that, my property is contiguous to yours. You will recall that my meadow lands extend to the edge of your birch woods—

Natalya.—Excuse my interrupting. You said: "My meadow lands!" What! Yours?

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—Indeed. The meadow lands are ours; not yours.

Lomov.—No, mine, most estimable *Natalya Stepanovna*.

Natalya.—That's news to me. When did they become yours?

Lomov.—What! When? I speak of those meadow-fields which form a triangle between your woods and the *Burnt Bog*.

Natalya.—Yes, yes; very well, they're ours.

Lomov.—No; you're mistaken, most estimable; they're mine.

Natalya.—Now just think, *Ivan Vasilyevitch*, since when have they become yours?

Lomov.—What! Since when? Why, they've always been ours.

Natalya.—Oh, excuse me!

Lomov.—It's shown on the map. Their ownership was contested, it is true, for a time, but now everyone knows they are ours. There is no question about it. Now you see my aunt's grandmother permitted your great-grandfather's peasants the use of this ground that they might make bricks. Your great-grandfather's peasants enjoyed the use of this land for some two score years, and had grown accustomed to regarding the land as their own property, but with the abolition of serfdom——

Natalya.—What you tell me amounts to nothing. My grandfather, quite as much as my great-grandfather always maintained that their land extended to the Burnt Bog: that is to say, the fields are ours. What is there then to discuss? I can't understand.— You're very provoking!

Lomov.—I'll show you the map, Natalya Stepanovna.

Natalya.—No, you're merely joking or perhaps just chaffing me—— What a surprise! For almost three hundred years we've been in possession of that land, and now all of a sudden we are told that it doesn't belong to us! Pray pardon me, Ivan Vasilyevitch, but I really can scarcely credit my ears—— Not that we care anything about the land, there are but five *dessiatin* in the entire strip, the whole hardly to be valued at three hundred roubles; but I revolt at the injustice. Say what you will, I cannot stand that.

Lomov.—Pray listen to me, I beg. Your great grandfather's peasants, as I have already had the honor to tell you, made bricks for my aunt's grandmother. The grandmother wishing to do the peasants a kindness——

Natalya.—Great grandfather, aunt, grandmother, I know nothing and care nothing about them. The land is ours; that's all.

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—Ours. You can talk for two days, you can put on ten dress-suits, the fields have been and shall still remain, ours ours, ours. We've no desire to claim any of your land; nor, on

the other hand, do we wish to be dispossessed of ours—as you wish——

Lomov.—I care nothing, Natalya Stepanovna, for the fields, but merely claim them as a matter of principle. If you wish, I'll present them to you.

Natalya.—I also can present them to you, since they're ours.—But I must, at least, say that all this strikes me as very strange, Ivan Vasilyevitch. Until now, we have always regarded you as a good neighbor. Last year we loaned you the thrasher and by so doing were compelled ourselves to wait for our grain until November. And now you act towards us like a gypsy;—you actually present me with my own land! Excuse me, but that isn't acting the good neighbor. According to my idea, it is impertinence, if you will permit——

Lomov.—According to your idea, then, I am a usurper? Mademoiselle, I have never appropriated to myself any land belonging to another, and I shall not permit anyone to charge me with such an accusation. (He pours out, precipitately, a glass of water which he drinks.) The fields are mine.

Natalya.—It's not true; they're ours.

Lomov.—Mine.

Natalya.—It's not true. I'll prove it to you. This very day I'll have the grass cut there.

Lomov.—What's that?

Natalya.—This very day, I'll send my mowers there.

Lomov.—I'll drive them off.

Natalya.—You'll not dare to.

Lomov.—(Pressing his heart.) The fields are mine; do you understand?—Mine.

Natalya.—Don't shout, I beg. At your own house you may hollow until you're hoarse with rage, if you like; but here, pray, keep within proper bounds.

Lomov.—Mademoiselle, were it not for my terrible palpitations and the way the veins are throbbing in my temples, I should speak to you in quite a different manner. (Shouts.) The fields are mine.

Natalya.—Ours!

Lomov.—Mine!

Natalya.—Ours!

Lomov.—Mine!

SCENE IV.

Lomov, Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Entering.) What's the matter? Why are you shouting?

Natalya.—Papa, please explain, won't you, to this gentleman, to whom those meadow-fields belong, to us or to him?

Chebukov.—(To Lomov.) My dear fellow, the fields are ours.

Lomov.—Pray permit me to ask, Stepan Stepanovitch, since when are they yours? You be reasonable, at least. My aunt's grandmother permitted your grandfather's peasants to use the fields gratuitously. The peasants enjoyed the benefit of the land for forty years, and came at last to consider it as their own, until—

Chebukov.—Permit me, my dear fellow; you forget that the peasants didn't pay your grandmother for the very reason, that its ownership was in question. But now, even the dogs that run the fields know they are ours. I should say that you do not appear to have seen the diagram.

Lomov.—But I'll prove to you that they're mine.

Chebukov.—Oh, you can't do that, my dear fellow.

Lomov.—Can't? But I will prove it to you.

Chebukov.—My dear sir, why shout? Shouting alone proves nothing. I've no desire for your property, nor do I propose to give away any of mine. Why should I? Indeed, should it come to this, should you wish to contest these fields, I should certainly present them to the peasants rather than to you. Understand?

Lomov.—I fail to understand what right you would have to give away others' property.

Chebukov.—Permit me to judge for myself whether I have this right or not. Really, young man, I am not accustomed to be spoken to in this manner. I'm twice your age, and I

must request you to speak to me more calmly and with more respect.

Lomov.—No; you evidently take me for a simpleton. You call my property yours, and then ask me to keep cool and speak respectfully. This is not the way good neighbors act, Stepan Stepanovitch. In fact, you're not a neighbor; you're a usurper.

Chebukov.—What's that? What did you say?

Natalya.—I'll order those fields mown at once.

Chebukov.—(To Lomov.) What did you say, sir?

Natalya.—The fields are ours and I'll not surrender, not surrender, not surrender.

Lomov.—We'll see. I'll prove by the courts that they're mine.

Chebukov.—By the courts? You just do it, sir. Just do it. I know you—you're only awaiting an opportunity to go to law. Your whole tribe were built that way,—every one of them.

Lomov.—Please do not insult my family. They were all honest people, and none of them ever brought a suit simply to ruin another—as your uncle did.

Chebukov.—Your family were all fools.

Natalya.—All, all, all.

Chebukov.—Your grandfather drank and your youngest aunt, Nastasya Mikhailovna, bye-the-bye, ran away with the architect—

Lomov.—And your mother was deformed. (Pressing his heart.) Oh, that stitch in my side! Oh, my head! Oh! oh! Water!

Chebukov.—And your father was a gambler and a rake.

Natalya.—And your aunt—a hussy with few equals.

Lomov.—I've no feeling in my left leg—and you're an intriguer. Oh, my heart! And, then, it's a secret to no one that, before election, you— My eyes are becoming hazy. Where is my hat?

Natalya.—Your behavior is vile, dishonest.

Chebukov.—And you're a perfidious man—a traitor, an imposter. Yes.

Lomov.—Ah! here's the hat. Oh, my heart! Where am I going? Where's the door? Oh! oh! I must be dying—I can scarcely drag my leg. (Moves toward the door.)

Chebukov.—(Shouting.) Never again put your foot inside my door.

Natalya.—Just go to the courts. We'll see!

Lomov.—(Staggers out.)

SCENE V.

Chebukov and Natalya.

Chebukov.—(Shouting after *Lomov.*) Go to the devil! (Walks excitedly to and fro.)

Natalya.—What a brigand! After this, how can one ever believe in good neighbors?

Chebukov.—Brigand! Ignoramus!

Natalya.—Monster! He not only appropriates our land, but insults us, to boot!

Chebukov.—And to think that such a fellow dared to come here with a proposal! Yes, a proposal!

Natalya.—A proposal?

Chebukov.—Yes, the audacious fellow actually came here to make you a marriage proposal.

Natalya.—Make me a marriage proposal? Why didn't you say so at first?

Chebukov.—And that's the reason he rigged himself up in that swallow-tail. The calf!

Natalya.—A marriage proposal? To me? (Drops into an arm-chair and groans.) He must come back! He must come back! He must come back!

Chebukov.—Who must come back?

Natalya.—As quick as possible; as quick as possible. I feel sick. He must come back!

Chebukov.—What's the matter? What do you want? (Presses his head between his hands.) Miserable creature that I am! I'll disappear—go hang myself—I'm undone.

Natalya.—I'm dying. He must come back!

Chebukov.—Phew! Right away. Don't howl. (Runs out.)

SCENE VI.

Natalya, alone.

Natalya.—What have we done? (She groans.) He must come back! He must come back!

SCENE VII.

Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Running in.) He's coming immediately, devil take him! You can talk to him yourself, I don't want to.

Natalya.—(Groans.) He must come back!

Chebukov.—(Shouts.) But he's coming, I tell you. What a terrible thing it is to have a daughter to marry off! I'll cut my throat. Yes, I will. We've insulted the man, driven him away with bitter words, or, rather, you did, you—

Natalya.—No, you.

Chebukov.—You see, the fault's mine! (Lomov appears at the door.) Well, here he is, talk to him yourself. (Leaves.)

SCENE VIII.

Natalya and Lomov.

Lomov.—(Enters as if fagged out.) Terrible palpitations—my leg is paralyzed. Such a pounding—

Natalya.—Pray, pardon us, Ivan Vasilyevitch; we were over-hasty. I recollect, now, the fields are really yours.

Lomov.—My heart palpitates frightfully—the fields are mine—both my eyes twitch—

Natalya.—Yes, the fields are yours. Sit down. (Both sit down.) We alone were in the wrong—

Lomov.—It's due to principle. I care nothing for the ground, only for the principle.

Natalya.—As to the principle—— But let's talk of something else.

Lomov.—And so much the more, as I can furnish proofs. My aunt's grandmother permitted your great-grandfather's peasants——

Natalya.—That's enough, quite enough on that subject. (Aside.) I really don't know how to begin. (Aloud.) Going hunting soon?

Lomov.—I think of trying my luck with black pheasants, most estimable Natalya Stepanovna, but not now—after harvest. Ah! have you heard? Just think what a misfortune! My Ugadaï, whom you know, limps.

Natalya.—What a shame! and why?

Lomov.—I don't know—met with an accident, probably, or was bitten by other dogs. (Sighs.) The best of dogs, not to speak of the money locked up in him. Why, do you know, I gave Miranov a hundred and twenty-five roubles for that dog.

Natalya.—You gave too much, Ivan Vasilyevitch.

Lomov.—No, not enough, to my mind. He's a splendid animal.

Natalya.—Papa gave only eighty-six roubles for his Otkataï, and you'll agree, of course, that Otkataï is a much finer dog than Ugadaï.

Lomov.—Otkataï, much finer than Ugadaï? Well, really! (Laughs.) Otkataï much finer than Ugadaï!

Natalya.—Why, certainly. Otkataï is rather too young, it is true, but as to his form, superior to that of Valchyansky.

Lomov.—Yes, with the lower jaw shorter.

Natalya.—Have you measured it?

Lomov.—Yes.

Natalya.—Now, in the first place, our Otkataï is a thoroughbred, son of Zhapryagai and of Staneska, while no one knows what blood your Ugadaï has in him. Moreover, he's old and as ugly as——

Lomov.—He's old, it's true; but, nevertheless, I wouldn't swap him for five of your Otkataï's. How is it possible? Ugadaï is a dog, whereas Otkataï— But, really, it's perfectly ridiculous to discuss the matter. There are thousands and thousands of your Otkataï's. Their price is twenty-five roubles.

Natalya.—To-day, Ivan Vasilyevitch, you are possessed by a spirit of contradiction. A few moments ago you imagined that the fields were yours, and now that Ugadaï is a finer dog than Otkataï. I'm not at all pleased when I hear one say what he doesn't really believe. Now, you know as well as you know anything that Otkataï is a hundred times finer than that beast—Ugadaï. Why, then, say the contrary?

Lomov.—I see, Natalya Stepanovna, that you take me either for a blind man or a simpleton. Don't you really know, then, that your Otkataï is inferior?

Natalya.—It's not true.

Lomov.—Inferior!

Natalya.—(Very loud.) It's not true.

Lomov.—But, why scream, mademoiselle?

Natalya.—Then, why do you talk like a brute? It's disgusting! Why, it's about time you had that dog of yours shot, and yet you compare him to Otkataï.

Lomov.—Excuse me, I cannot continue this discussion because of my palpitations, which are beginning again.

Natalya.—I've noticed that the hunters that know the least always do the most shouting.

Lomov.—Mademoiselle, be merciful, and say no more. My heart is bursting. (Shouts.) Keep quiet, won't you?

Natalya.—I shall not keep quiet until you admit that Otkataï is a hundred times better than your Ugadaï.

Lomov.—A hundred times worse? Would that your dog were dead! Oh, my eyes!—my temples!—my shoulder!

Natalya.—Your Ugadaï don't need to die; he's half carrion now.

Lomov.—(Crying.) Keep still. My heart is bursting.

Natalya.—No, I won't keep still, either.

SCENE IX.

Lomov, Natalya and Chebukov.

Chebukov.—(Entering.) Well, what's new?

Natalya.—Papa, tell us frankly, now, on your word of honor, which is the better dog, our Otkataï or his Ugadaï?

Lomov.—Stepan Stepanovitch, I implore you, tell me but one thing: Is your Otkataï's lower jaw the larger, yes or no?

Chebukov.—Well, suppose it is? It's of no importance. He's the very best dog in all the country round, notwithstanding.

Lomov.—But my Ugadaï is better, you'll admit?

Chebukov.—Now, don't get excited, my dear fellow. Allow me to say—Ugadaï has very fine qualities—is a thoroughbred, sturdy and well-formed; but, if you'll kindly permit, your dog has a very grave defect—his age.

Lomov.—Pardon me, my heart is palpitating so. Let's get down to facts. You will doubtless recall that at the last hunt my Ugadaï kept even pace with the count's Ramsaï, while your Otkataï was a mile behind.

Chebukov.—He was behind simply because the count's game-keeper had whipped him.

Lomov.—For good cause. While all the other dogs were following the fox, your Otkataï had pounced upon a lamb.

Chebukov.—It isn't true. My dear fellow, I get warmed-up rather easily, and, for this reason, I beg you to cut short this discussion. He was whipped through jealousy, purely. Everybody had a rod in pickle for him. Yes, everybody. Oh, I know you. No sooner do you see a better dog than Ugadaï than you immediately begin— Oh, I remember very well.

Lomov.—And I remember, also.

Natalya.—(Mimicing him.) And what do you remember?

Lomov.—Oh, these palpitations! There's no feeling in my leg!—I can't stand it any longer.

Natalya.—(Mimicing him again.) Palpitations? What sort of a sportsman are you? Your place is in the kitchen beside the fire, and not at a hunt. Palpitations!

Chebukov.—Yes, truly, what sort of a sportsman are you? The proper place for you and your palpitations is in the house, not in a saddle. It wouldn't be quite so bad if you really went to hunt game; but no, you go simply to hunt up law-suits and spoil the work of others' dogs. But let's drop this discussion. In reality, you're not a sportsman at all.

Lomov.—Come, now, and do you call yourself a sportsman? You go merely to curry favor with the count and concoct intrigues. Oh, my heart! You're an intriguer.

Chebukov.—What's that? I'm an intriguer? (Shouts.) Won't you keep still?

Lomov.—Intriguer!

Chebukov.—Whipper-snapper!

Lomov.—Old rat! Jesuit!

Chebukov.—Shut up! If you don't I'll pepper you as I would a quail.

Lomov.—Everybody knows—— Oh, my heart!—that your deceased wife trounced you. Oh, my leg!—my temples!—I shall drop, shall drop!

Chebukov.—And that you are hen-pecked by your house-keeper.

Lomov.—Oh, my! oh, my! oh, my! My heart's bursted! My shoulder's dislocated! Where is my shoulder? I'm dying. (Falls into an arm-chair.) A doctor!

Chebukov.—Whipper-snapper!

Lomov.—I feel so bad, so very bad. (Faints.)

Natalya.—What sort of a sportsman are you? You can't even keep your seat. (To her father.) Papa, what's the matter with him? Papa, look, papa. (Calls loudly.) Ivan Vasilyevitch. He's dead.

Lomov.—I feel bad—I can't get my breath—air!

Natalya.—He's dead. (Shakes Lomov by the arm.) Ivan Vas—— Ivan Vasil—— What have we done? He's dead. (Falls into an arm-chair.) The doctor, the doctor! (Becomes hysterical.)

Chebukov.—What's the matter? What do you want?

Natalya.—(Groans.) He's dead; he's dead!

Chebukov.—Who's dead? (Looking at Lomov.) Is he really dead? Heavens! Water! The doctor! (Puts a glass of water to Lomov's lips.) Drink. No, he doesn't drink. He must be dead. How unfortunate I am! Why didn't I finish myself? Why didn't I do it before now? What am I waiting for? Give me a knife! Give me a pistol! (Lomov moves.) But he's coming to, it seems. Drink. Here, so—

Lomov.—I can't see anything. Where am I?

Chebukov.—Get married as soon as possible—and go to the devil! She consents. (Places his daughter's hand in Lomov's.) She consents. You have my blessing—only leave me in peace.

Lomov.—Oh, what is it? (Rising.) Who?

Chebukov.—She consents. Well, then, kiss each other and—go to the devil!

Natalya.—He's alive. Yes, yes, I consent.

Chebukov.—Now, kiss each other.

Lomov.—Ah, who? (They kiss.) That's pleasant. But, really, what's it all about? Oh, yes, I understand. My heart!—my temples! I'm happy, Natalya Stepanovna. (Kisses her hand.) My leg has come round all right.

Natalya.—And I'm—I'm happy, too.

Chebukov.—And I'm relieved—phew!

Natalya.—You'll at least admit now, won't you, that Ugadaï is worse than Otkataï?

Lomov.—Better!

Natalya.—Worse!

Chebukov.—Behold the beginning of matrimonial felicity! Serve the champagne.

Lomov.—Better!

Natalya.—Worse! Worse! Worse!

Chebukov.—(Endeavoring to make himself heard.) Some champagne here—some champagne.

THE END.

THE INSPECTOR

(THE REVIZOR)

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

NIKOLAI VASILIEVITCH GOGOL.

FIRST PRODUCED AT ST. PETERSBURG UNDER THE **AUTHOR'S**
OWN DIRECTION IN 1836.

Translated from the Russian by

T. HART DAVIES.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANTON ANTONOVITCH SKVOZNIK-
DMUCHANOVSKY, *Prefect.*

ANNA ANDREEVNA, *his Wife.*

MARIA ANTONOVNA, *his Daughter.*

LUKA LUKITCH, *School Manager.*

HIS WIFE.

AMMOS FEDOROVITCH LIAPKIN-
TIAPKIN, *Judge.*

ARTEMIE PHILOPOVITCH ZEMLIANKA,
Manager of Hospital.

IVAN KUSMITCH, *Postmaster.*

PETER IVANOVITCH DOBCHINSKY,

PETER IVANOVITCH BOBCHINSKY,

Two local County Squires.

IVAN ALEXANDROVITCH CHLESTAKOFF,
*an official from St. Petersburg, supposed to be
the Inspector.*

OSSIP, *his Servant, a serf.*

CHRISTIAN IVANOVITCH HUBNER, *a Doctor.*

ABDULIN, *a Shopkeeper of the town.*

*Also police orderlies and minor officials, shop-
keepers, waiters and women belonging to the
town.*

THE SCENE IS LAID IN A SMALL
RUSSIAN PROVINCIAL TOWN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—A Room in the Prefect's House.

Present: Anton Antonovitch, Prefect; Ammos Fedorovitch, Judge; Luka Lukitch, School Manager; Christian Ivanovitch, Doctor; Artemie Phillipovitch, Manager of Hospital; two Orderlies.

Prefect.—I have called you together, gentlemen, to tell you a piece of news, which I am afraid you won't much like. A government inspector is coming here.

Ammos and Artemie.—(Together.) What, an inspector?

Pre.—Yes, an inspector from St. Petersburg, incognito, having secret instructions, too.

Ammos.—That is the game, is it?

Art.—As if we had not worry enough without that.

Pre.—I had a presentiment of it; last night I dreamt about a couple of most extraordinary rats. It is a fact, I assure you; such brutes I never saw before in my life. They were black and of a monstrous size. They came and sniffed about and off they went again; and now here is a letter I have received from Andrea Ivanovitch Tchmechhof—you know him, Artemie Phillipovitch; this is what he says—"My dear old kind friend and gossip (mumbles in a low voice, running his eyes rapidly over it) to tell you"—hum, hum! Oh, here it is—"I hasten to tell you amongst other things that an official has arrived with instructions to make an inspection of the whole province, and especially of our district. I have this information from a thoroughly trustworthy source, though he gives himself out as a mere ordinary traveller. However, as I know that you, like everyone else, have your little peccadilloes, and are not

such a fool as to let slip any little pickings that you might have made,"—hum, well, these are his ideas; oh, here it is—"I advise you to look out, for he may arrive at any moment, if indeed he is not already come, and is living somewhere in your town incognito." Yes, hum, hum! Well, the rest is all family matters. "Sister Anna has come here with her husband; Ivan Kirilovitch has grown excessively fat and is always playing on the fiddle." And so on, and so on. Well, there's a pretty state of things.

Ammos.—Most extraordinary circumstance, most extraordinary; and it is no laughing matter, I can tell you.

Luka.—What does it all mean, Anton Antonovitch? What is it all about? Why should an Inspector come at all?

Pre.—Why? (With a sigh.) It's fate, I suppose. So far, thanks be to God, they confined their attentions to other districts. Now our turn has come, that's all.

Ammos.—I think, Anton Antonovitch, that there is some profound political meaning in all this. I will tell you what, Russia, that is to say, intends to go to war, and the Government, you see, have sent an official to find out if there is not anything like treason somewhere about here.

Pre.—What a brilliant idea! You are a sharp fellow, you are! Treason in a district town. Are we on the frontier, I should like to know? Why, you might gallop away from here for three years without coming to a foreign country.

Ammos.—That is all very well, but still, I tell you, you don't understand, you don't; the Government sees far, and never mind what the distance may be, they have their eye on everything, I can tell you.

Pre.—Well, whether they have or not, I don't care; I have given you fair warning, gentlemen, and I advise you to look out; for my part I have taken certain precautions, and I advise you to do the same, especially you, Artemie Phillipovitch. There is not the slightest doubt that the first thing that this official will want to do as soon as he comes is to inspect the hospitals placed in your charge, to see that everything is in good order, that the nightcaps are clean, and that the patients do not look like sweeps as they usually do.

Art.—Oh, don't bother about that. Well, perhaps they might as well have clean nightcaps on.

Pre.—And then you must get written over each bed in Latin, or some other foreign language, what each patient has got. This is your business, Dr. Christian—when each patient fell ill, the day of the week, and the month, and really you must not let the patients smoke such strong tobacco. It makes you sneeze when you go in, and I think it would be better if there were not quite so many of them. It might be thought that they were not looked after properly, or the doctor was not up to his work, or something of that kind.

Art.—Oh, as for that, Dr. Christian and I manage first rate; "let nature take her course," that is our motto. We don't go in for expensive medicines. Man is a perfectly simple animal. If he is going to die, he will die, and if he is going to get well, why, he will get well, that's all; besides, our friend Dr. Christian could not very well explain himself to the patients, as he does not know a single word of Russian. (Dr. Christian grunts.)

Pre.—Well, you know, Ammos, I should advise you to look a little after the Sessions Court House; just in the vestibule, where the petitioners generally wait, the porter keeps a lot of geese and goslings, which go waddling about under your very feet. Of course it is highly praiseworthy in any one to go in for household economy, but still that is no reason why a hall porter should do so, and indeed, you know that is not exactly the place for it. I meant to have told you about this before, but somehow or other I always forgot to.

Ammos.—All right; I will have them all driven out to-day into the kitchen. I tell you what: come and dine with me, and we will get rid of a few.

Pre.—Another bad thing is that in the court itself there is all manner of rubbish put out to dry, and there is a hunting whip hanging above the very cupboard which contains the rolls of the court. I know you are a great man for sport, but still I think you had better take it down temporarily, and when the inspector has gone away you can hang it up again if you like. Then that assessor of yours; I believe he is a good man at his work, but he smells so infernally of liquor, as if he had just

come out of a distillery. I don't think that is quite the correct thing. I would have spoken to you about this a long time ago, but something or other put it out of my head. You know there is a remedy for that sort of thing, although I believe he says he has had that peculiar odor about him since he was born. He might be advised to eat onions or garlic or something of that kind. Our friend Dr. Christian, here, could give him lots of drugs which would set him all right. (Dr. Christian grunts again.)

Ammos.—No, he says it is incurable; he says that his nurse injured him when he was a child, and he smelt of brandy ever since.

Pre.—Well, then, it can't be helped. I merely wanted to call your attention to it; and now as to the private arrangements, and what Andrea Ivanovitch is pleased to call "little peccadilloes." I really don't know what to say; and, indeed, what is there to be said? Every man has his little weaknesses; he was created by Providence like that, and it is no good your Voltairean free-thinkers saying he was not.

Ammos.—But, Anton Antonovitch, what do you understand by these little weaknesses, as you call them? There are weaknesses and weaknesses. I tell every one openly that I take bribes, but then what kind of bribes are they? Greyhound pups, that is all; that is quite another thing.

Pre.—That does not matter a bit; greyhound puppies or anything else, they are bribes all the same.

Ammos.—I don't agree with you there. Now, if some one has a fur coat worth 500 rubles, or a shawl for your wife—

Pre.—Well, that is not a bit worse than taking greyhound puppies. You are an atheist, you are, you don't go to church, whereas I am firm in the faith, at all events, and go every Sunday. Oh, I know you; when you begin to talk about the creation of the world, it is enough to make one's hair stand on end.

Ammos.—Well, they are my own opinions; I have reasoned them out for myself.

Pre.—In some cases a great deal of talent is worse than none at all. However, I merely mentioned the court as it were casually, for to tell the truth, it is hardly to be supposed that any one would be such a fool as to look into it; it is just one

of those blessed institutions which Providence itself looks after, I suppose; but there is another thing of much more importance, the schools; Luka Lukitch, you really must look after the masters, and see that they are all right. They are learned men, of course, educated in various colleges, but they have very queer manners, as, indeed, is always the case with men of that profession. One of them, for instance—that fellow with the fat face, I can't remember his name—he never can go up into his chair without making the most extraordinary faces, like this (imitates him), and then he takes hold of his beard and smoothes it under his necktie. Of course it is all very well for him to make faces like that at the boys; I dare say that is part of their training, it is all right for them, I am no judge of that; but fancy if he did it at some official visitor! It might be a most serious matter. This inspector, or some other personage, might take it as a personal insult, and heaven knows what might be the consequences.

Luka.—Well, but what can I do with him? I have told him about it lots of times; only the other day, when our director came, he made the most hideous faces I have ever seen in my life. He doesn't mean any harm, but I get a reprimand for it, all the same, in the shape of, "Why are the youth corrupted with free-thinking?"

Pre.—Well, then, there is the history master. I must really speak about him; he has a learned head on his shoulders, no doubt about that, and has absorbed a tremendous lot of information, but he lectures with such warmth that he quite forgets himself. I heard him once in class. So long as he kept to the Assyrians and the Babylonians, he was all right; but when he came to Alexander of Macedon, I can't tell you how he went on. I declare I thought the place was on fire. He jumped down from his desk, seized his chair and dashed it on the ground; he meant, of course, that Alexander the Great was a great hero; still, that is no reason why you should go breaking chairs; it is a loss to the government, too.

Luka.—Yes, he is an enthusiastic fellow. I have spoken to him lots of times about it, and all his answer is: "Say what you like, I will not spare life itself in the cause of learning."

Pre.—Yes, that is the inscrutable law of fate—a man of genius either takes to drink, or else he goes and makes hideous faces which frighten the very life out of one.

Luka.—Heaven forbid that I should ever have to be a teacher. Nothing but worry; every one interferes with you; everybody wants to show that he, too, is a man of talent.

Pre.—Well, this is all very well, but what does it matter? There is that cursed incognito I can't get over. He will pop in all of a sudden with "You are here, my friend, are you? Who is the judge?" "Liapkin Tiapkin," says I. "Send Liapkin Tiapkin here," says he. "And who looks after the hospitals?" "Zemlianka," says I. "Oh, send him here, too!" That's the mischief of it.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—Tell me, gentlemen, what is this official coming here for?

Pre.—Haven't you heard?

Post.—Yes, sir; I heard of it from Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky, who was with me at the post office a moment ago.

Pre.—Well, come; what do you think about it?

Post.—What do I think? I think that it means war with the Turks.

Ammos.—By Jove! that is just what I thought, too.

Pre.—Oh, you both found a regular mare's nest.

Post.—It is a fact—with the Turks, I say, and it is France that does all the mischief.

Pre.—What humbug you are talking! War with the Turks! Stuff and rubbish! We shall get it hot, not the Turks. I have got a letter.

Post.—Well, then, there is not going to be war with the Turks, I suppose.

Pre.—Ivan Kismitch, what do you think about it all?

Post.—What do I think? What do you think, Anton Antonovitch?

Pre.—What do I think? I am not much afraid, just a little anxious; it is the shopkeepers and the townspeople that

trouble me; they say that I put them through their facings, but heaven be my witness, if I have taken a trifle or so from any one, it was all done without any malice. I say (leading him aside), I have just been thinking whether there has not been some report or other made against me. Why, if you come to think of it, should an inspector be sent here at all? Look here, Ivan Kismitch, this is a matter that concerns us all; could not you just manage to unseal somehow and read every letter that enters the post office, both coming and going and see if by chance it contains any report or correspondence about us in it? If not, you can seal it up again, and then deliver it, or simply deliver it open.

Post.—Oh, you need not tell me how to carry on a post office; I know all about it; don't teach your grandmother; I open every letter as it is, not so much as a precaution, but out of pure curiosity; I am always dying to know what is going on in the world; I tell you, I get some interesting reading. I keep some letters for the simple pleasure of reading them; such descriptions of various occurrences! highly edifying, I can tell you; much better than the "Moscow Gazette."

Pre.—Well, tell me, then, have you read anything about an official coming from St. Petersburg?

Post.—No, nothing about a Petersburg official, but plenty about the officials of Kostroma and Saratoff. I declare it is a pity you don't read these letters; there are some first-rate things in them. Not long ago, for instance, a young subaltern wrote to his friends describing a ball and all the larks he had. It was grand. "My dear friend," he said, "my life is simply heavenly: lots of girls, bands always playing, and uniforms all over the shop." He put his whole heart into this letter, I can tell you. I kept it on purpose; shall I read it to you?

Pre.—Oh, no; I don't care; I have no time for it now; but look here, Ivan Kismitch, if by any chance a report or complaint should happen to go in, don't hesitate a moment, but lay hands on that and keep it.

Post.—Of course I will, with the greatest pleasure.

Amos.—You had better look out, my friend; you will come to grief some day over this.

Post.—Oh, never fear.

Pre.—It is all right, all right! It would be a different matter altogether if you were to make any public use of it; but as it is, it is merely a private affair.

Ammos.—Well, we have got into a mess somehow. But look here, Anton Antonovitch, what I really came for to-day was to make you a present, a nice little puppy, own sister to the dog you know. You heard, of course, that Chiptovitch has gone to law with Vachovinski, and I am having a rare good time of it. I get coursing over the grounds of both defendant and plaintiff.

Pre.—My dear fellow, don't bother me about your coursing now. It is that cursed incognito that haunts me like a nightmare; I can't get it out of my head. I expect every moment that the door will fly open and in will walk—

Enter Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky at a rush, tumbling over each other in their anxiety to get their story out.

Bobchinsky.— } (Together.) { Marvellous event!
Dobchinsky.— } Extraordinary news!

All.—What is it, what is it?

Dob.—Something utterly unforeseen. We come to the inn—

Bob.—We come to the inn, Peter Ivanovitch and I—

Dob.—Peter, don't; do let me tell the story.

Bob.—No, let me; you can't tell stories a bit.

Dob.—You will make a mess of it, and leave out half of it.

Bob.—I won't; I remember it all perfectly, I swear; don't interrupt me; do let me tell it; don't interfere. Gentlemen, kindly tell Peter not to interfere with me.

Pre.—Well, tell us what is it, for heaven's sake; I feel quite bewildered. Sit down, sit down; take a chair. Here, you sit here; now, then, what is it?

Bob.—All right, gentlemen, I will tell you everything as it happened. No sooner had I had the pleasure of leaving you after your honor had been pleased to be disturbed by the letter you had received; yes, well, then at once—now don't interrupt me, Peter; I know it all quite well—yes, off I ran, be pleased to take

note, to Karobkin; did not find Karobkin at home, so I went off to Rastakovsky; found Rastakovsky out, so off I went to Ivan Kismitch, here, to tell him the news you have received. Well, I was just going there, when I met Peter, here.

Dob.—Near the stall where they sell pies.

Bob.—Yes, near the stall where they sell pies. Well, yes, I met Peter there, and I said to him: "Have you heard the news which Anton Antonovitch has just received from a trustworthy source?" And it appears Peter had heard of it from your housekeeper, Avdotia, who had been sent, I don't know why, to Philip Antonovitch's house.

Dob.—Yes, for a little keg to put some French brandy into.

Bob.—(Thrusting him off.) Yes, for a little keg to put French brandy into. Well, we were coming, Peter and I, to Pochechueff's house—don't interrupt me, Peter; how tiresome you are! don't interrupt; do keep still—well, we were going to Pochechueff's house, and on the way Peter says, "Let us go to the inn;" says he, "there is a vacuum in my stomach; I have eaten nothing since the morning, and I have got quite a stomach-ache." So Peter's stomach, you see—and says he, "I hear that they received some fresh salmon at the inn, so we will go there and have a little lunch." We had hardly entered the inn, when we saw a young man.

Dob.—A good-looking young fellow, not in uniform.

Bob.—Yes, a good-looking young fellow, not in uniform, walking up and down the room like this. (Suiting the action to the word.) And there was a kind of thoughtfulness, there was something in his face, his manners, and here (touching his forehead) there was all that kind of thing, don't you know? I suspected something at once, and I said to Peter, "Hallo! there is something a little out of the common here." Yes, and Peter beckoned to the landlord: you know him; that fellow Vlas; his wife was confined about three weeks ago—such a fine, sturdy boy, he will keep an inn some day, like his father. Well, Peter beckoned to Vlas and asked him in a whisper, "Who is that young fellow?" he says, and to this Vlas answers, "That young fellow," says he—Oh, don't interrupt me, Peter, don't interrupt me; you could not tell the thing yourself, you lisp so; you have got a tooth that whistles—"Well," says he,

Vlas, you know, I mean, "that young fellow," says he, "is an official, he is from St. Petersburg, his name is Ivan Alexandrovitch Chlestakoff; he is going to the Saratoff district," says he, "and he has a queer way of recommending himself. He has been here a fortnight, never leaves the inn, tells me to put down everything in the bill, doesn't pay a farthing for anything." When he told me this it all flashed across me in a moment. "Whew!" says I to Peter.

Dob.—No, Peter, I said "Whew!"

Bob.—Well, first of all you said "Whew!" and then I said "Whew!" "Whew!" said I to Peter; "what is he here for when he is going to the Saratoff district? Yes, indeed." Well there you have this very official.

Pre.—Who? what do you mean? What official?

Bob.—The official you got the letter about—the inspector.

Pre.—(In terror.) What do you mean? Gracious heaven this can't be the man?

Dob.—It is, it is! He pays for nothing, and he stays here. Who else can it be? And his road pass is made out for Saratoff.

Bob.—By Jove, I tell you it is the very man; he is so sharp, he looks into everything. He saw we were eating salmon, Peter and I, chiefly, you know, because Peter's inside was not—well, he looked into our plates; I assure you, I nearly fainted with fright.

Pre.—The Lord have mercy upon us, miserable sinners! What room has he got?

Dob.—He is in No. 5, under the staircase.

Bob.—The same room that the two officers had a fight in last year on their way through.

Pre.—Has he been here long?

Dob.—A fortnight; he came on St. Basil's Day.

Pre.—A fortnight. (Aside.) Holy saints and martyrs bring me safely out of this! During this last fortnight I have had the non-commissioned officer's wife flogged—the prisoners have had no provisions served out to them, and the pot-houses and the streets, they are simply like a gin-shop—filthy beyond

anything. Oh! it is an awful business, this; I swear it is perfectly awful. (Clutches his hair.)

Art.—Well, Anton Antonovitch, shall we all set out for the inn in martial array?

Ammos.—No, we must go in due order, headed by the Mayor, then the Clergy, then the Merchants' Guilds. In the works of John Mason——

Pre.—No, no; leave it all to me. I have been in as bad scrapes as this in my life, and have got out of them and have even got thanks for my admirable conduct. Maybe heaven will not abandon me now. (Turning to Bob.) So you say he is a young fellow, eh?

Dob.—Yes, about 23 or 24, not much more.

Pre.—Well, all the better, you can easily get over a young man. It would be a job if he were some old devil of a fellow, but a young man, why, he is all on the surface. Well, gentlemen, you go and get your departments into order, and I will go there alone with Peter here, but only quite privately you know, for a stroll, just to find out if the travellers are properly treated in the inn. Hallo there, Swestunoff!

Swes.—What do you want?

Pre.—Go at once for the District Police Inspector. No, wait a bit, I want you here. Just tell some one to send me the District Police Inspector as quickly as possible and then come here.

Art.—Let us go, Ammos Theodrovitch, some misfortune may really happen.

Ammos.—What are you afraid of? Put clean nightcaps on to your patients, then you are all right.

Art.—Nightcaps, indeed, the orders are to give the patients oatmeal soup, but there is such a smell of cabbage all through the corridors that you have to hold your nose.

Ammos.—Well, I am all right at all events, I have not got to worry. Who would ever dream of coming into the Sessions Court House; and if any one does, and looks into some file of papers, he would have a bad time of it, I can tell you. Here have I been sitting 15 years on the Judge's Bench, and when I glance at a report, ha! ha! I give it up. Solomon himself

could not tell what was true and what were lies in those reports.

(Exeunt Ammos, Luka, Art., Chris., and Postmaster.)

Pre.—Now, then, is the droschky ready?

Ord.—All ready, sir.

Pre.—Go into the street; no, stay: yes, go and fetch—where are the rest of the fellows? You can't surely be here alone. I ordered Prokaroff to be here as well, where is he?

Ord.—Prokaroff is in a private house, but he is not able to attend to duty.

Pre.—What do you mean?

Ord.—I mean what I say. He came home dead drunk this morning. They emptied a couple of buckets of water over him, but it is of no use, he is not come to yet.

Pre.—Good God, what shall I do? Well, you go into the street then; no, wait a bit—run first to my room, and get my sword and my new hat. Now, then, Peter, let us be off.

Bob.—Me too, me too, let me come too, Anton Antonovitch.

Pre.—No, no, it is impossible, it would not do, and besides there is no room for you in the droschky.

Bob.—Never mind, I will come; I shall manage somehow; I will run behind. If I can only have a look at him through a crack in the door, and see how he behaves; these wonderful manners of his they talk about.

Pre.—Run at once and collect the head Dvorniks; let each one take——Now look at that sword, it is all scratched; that cursed shop-keeper Abdulin, he sees that his Prefect has got an old sword and he doesn't bring me a new one; cunning rascals, the scoundrels! with their petitions always ready under their coats. Tell each man to take a street in his hand—what the devil am I talking about, a street in his hand—a broom in his hand I mean, and sweep the streets that lead to the inn, and sweep it clean, do you hear, you rogues? I know you; you make cupboard love, and stuff away the silver spoons into your boots. Just look out or I will be down on you pretty sharp. What did you do with the merchant Tchernaeff, eh? He gave you a couple of yards of cloth for your uniform and

you charged for the whole piece. Just you look out; you swindle above your rank; off with you, you thief.

Enter Superintendent of Police.

Pre.—Hallo! Stefan Illitch, where the devil have you been? What is the meaning of this?

Ins.—I—I was there; just outside the gates.

Pre.—Well, look here; an official from St. Petersburg has just come. How have you arranged?

Ins.—Carried out your orders, sir; I have sent an orderly with the dvorniks to clean the pavements.

Pre.—Where is Derjimorda?

Ins.—He has gone to man the fire engine.

Pre.—And Prokaroff is drunk, eh?

Ins.—Yes, sir.

Pre.—How came you to allow him to get like that?

Ins.—I don't know how it happened. There was a row outside in the town yesterday, and Prokaroff went there to restore order, and came back drunk.

Pre.—Well, look here, this is what you must do. The Lieutenant is of good height, so he had better stand on the bridge to keep order there, and tell them to sweep down that paling, that one by the shoemaker's shop, and tell them to stick up a pole with a wisp of straw on the top as if some surveying was going on. The fact is, the more dilapidated the place is, the more it proves the energy of the Town Prefect. By Jove! I forgot, they have gone and shot about forty cartloads of rubbish against that very paling. What a beastly town this is! As soon as you go and put up some memorial, or simply a paling, all sorts of rubbish get shot against it. The devil only knows where it all comes from, and if this Petersburg official should ask the policemen if they are contented, just you mind that every man-jack of them says, "Yes, your worship, we are perfectly contented." Just let me catch anyone saying he is discontented, and I will give him something to be discontented about afterwards. (Sighs deeply.) Ah! I have been to blame—much to blame—heaven grant only that I get out of this

mess quickly, and with flying colors, and I will give the finest candle to the church that has ever been given. I will make each beast of a grocer give me 100 pounds of wax for the purpose, see if I don't! O Lord! O Lord! Well, come on, Peter. (In his flurry takes up the case containing his cocked hat, and puts it on his head.)

Ins.—Anton Antonovitch, that is the hat box, not the hat.

Pre.—Oh, the devil! (Throws it down.) If this Inspector should happen to ask whether the church belonging to the hospital, for which a sum of money was assigned five years ago, you know what I mean—well, if he wants to know why it is not built, don't forget to say that we did begin it, but it was destroyed by fire. I made a report to this effect. Otherwise some one will forget and play the fool, and say it was never begun at all, mind that. And tell Derjimorda not to use his fists too freely for the sake of order. He makes every one see stars all round—innocent as well as guilty. Well, Peter, let's be going. (Goes out and returns.) And whatever you do, don't let the soldiers go out in the streets with nothing on. These wretched militiamen will put on nothing but a uniform coat over their shirt with no trowsers at all. Dirty brutes!

(*Exeunt Omnes.*)

Enter Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Anna Andreevna.—Here, I say, where are they? Here, husband, Anton, Anton. It is all your fault, Maria, it is always you; you must go and dawdle, "I want a pin," "I want a fichu," "wait a moment," that's the way you go on. Anton, where are you? Has he come? The Inspector, has he got a moustache? What kind of moustache?

Pre.—(Outside.) I will tell you all about it soon, my dear.

Anna.—Soon, indeed, I like that! I don't want to know soon. I only want to hear one word. Is he a Colonel, eh? Why, he is gone. Oh, I will pay him out for this! It is all you, Maria. "Mamma, wait a moment, I want to pin my fichu behind, I will be with you in half a second." This is your half a second, is it? All owing to you that we have not heard anything. It is all that vain, flirting way you have got. She hears that the postmaster is here, and behold! we must look at our-

selves in the glass, and walk up to it first for this side, then for that. She imagines he is paying court to her, and he simply makes a face at her the moment she turns round.

Maria Antonovna.—But really, mamma, it can't be helped; we shall know all about it in a couple of hours.

Anna.—In a couple of hours; thank you kindly, Miss, much obliged for the answer; why didn't you say in a couple of months? We shall know still better then. Avdotia, did you hear? Well, has anyone come, didn't you hear? What a fool. She waves her arms. Let her wave! You might have asked him about it all the same. Could not tell, couldn't you, you flat-headed thing, thinking of nothing but lovers. Eh, what's that? They drove off so fast, eh? Well, you might have run after the droschky; be off at once, do you hear? Run and make inquiries where they have gone to, find out thoroughly who has come, and what sort of man he is, do you hear? Look in at the key-hole; find out everything, what kind of eyes he has got, whether they are dark or not, and come back again this minute, do you hear? Quick! Look sharp! (Goes on calling, till the curtain falls.)

ACT II.

SCENE.—A badly furnished Room in a Country Inn.

Ossip alone, lying on his master's bed.

Ossip.—The devil take it! how hungry I am. There is a rumbling inside me as if a whole regiment of trumpeters were in full swing, and we shan't reach home not by a long way. Two months ago since we left St. Petersburg; spent all his money on the road. Now he sits with his tail twisted under him and cools down generally. We had lots of money for the journey, more than enough, but no—he must needs swagger in every town we came to. (Imitating him.) “Hallo, Ossip,” says he, “get me the best room, and order me the best dinner they can serve up, I can't stand a bad dinner, I want the best they can manage.” That's the way we go on. If it was for anyone that was worth the while, well and good. But what's the good of swaggering before a postoffice clerk. Then he

scrapes an acquaintance with the first traveller he meets. Out come the cards, then the whole thing bursts up. Oh, I am sick of this life; I swear, it is better to be in the old village; there is not so much society certainly, but at the same time there is less trouble. You may lie on a bench all day long and eat pies. No one, of, course, can deny, if the truth must be told, that the Petersburg life is the best of all. If only you have money then the life is fine: theatres, dancing dogs, everything you want. Everyone talks so politely. Dukes and princes could not talk better. You go into the market, the shopkeepers call out "Your Honor." If you go into a ferry boat, you might happen to sit next to a Government Official. If you want society, go into the shops, and you will find a Life-Guardsman talking about the camp, and explaining every star in heaven till you can see them as plain as the palm of your hand. Then some officer's wife will be gossiping, and such a lovely chambermaid looks in, such splendid manners; the devil take it! you never hear a rude word! Everyone calls you "Sir." If you are tired of walking, you can call a cab, and there you can sit like a gentleman, and if you don't want to pay you need not—every house has got a back door. You just slip out of that, and the devil himself could not find you. One thing is bad, sometimes you eat until you can't eat any more, and at others you are ready to split with hunger—as I am now, for instance. It is all his fault. What can I do with him? The Governor sends him money, and instead of taking care of it, off he goes on the spree; drives about all the day in a cab; he must have a ticket for the theatre every day; and in a week it is all gone. Off I go to the old-clothes shop to sell his new coat. Sometimes he is cleaned out to his last shirt, so that he has nothing on his back but a jacket and an overcoat. All true, by Jove! such fine cloth, too, real English. He pays a hundred and fifty rubles for a single dress coat and then lets it go for twenty. As for his breeches, they simply fetch nothing at all, and this is all because he will not take to work. Instead of that, all the time goes on swaggering up the Nevsky Prospect and playing cards. If the old gentleman only knew, he would not care a rap for your being called an Official, he would up with your shirt, and smack you so that you would rub yourself for four days afterwards. If you go in for Government

Service, you must stick to it, that's what I say. Here's the landlord. He says, "I will not give you anything to eat till you have paid for what you have had," and what if we don't pay him? Ah! (Sighing.) O Lord! what wouldn't I give for a good basin of cabbage soup! I feel as if I could eat the whole world. Hallo! there's a knock, he is coming. (Gets up.)

Enter Chlestakoff.

Chlestakoff.—Here, take this. (Gives him cap and stick.) Now, then, you rascal you have been lying on my bed again!

Oss.—What should I lie on your bed for? Suppose I had never seen a bed before?

Chles.—You liar, you have been on it, just look, it is all in a mess!

Oss.—Well, what has that to do with me? I suppose I know what a bed is; I have got feet and I can stand on them; what do I want with your bed?

Chles.—Just look and see if there is any tobacco in my pouch.

Oss.—How on earth should there be any? You know you smoked the last bit four days ago.

Chles.—(Walks up and down, compressing his lips, then in a loud and decided voice.) Look here, Ossip.

Oss.—Well, what do you want?

Chles.—Just you go down there.

Oss.—Where?

Chles.—(Almost in entreaty.) You know—to the bar, and just tell them that I want my dinner.

Oss.—No, no! you don't catch me going down there.

Chles.—What are you grinning about, you fool?

Oss.—Well, it's all the same whether I go or not, you'll get nothing from the bar. The landlord said he was not going to give us any more dinner.

Chles.—How dare he refuse to give us dinner! What nonsense!

Oss.—And he says, too, that he will go to the Prefect and complain that a gentleman has been here a fortnight and has

not paid a farthing. "You and your master," he says, "are a couple of scamps; your master is a swindler, that's what he is. Lord bless you," says he, "we have seen lots of swindlers and rogues like him."

Chles.—And you think it rather good sport, you black-guard, to repeat all this to me!

Oss.—(Quoting.) "In this way," says he, "any one can come and stay on and you can't get rid of them. I am not going to stand this kind of joke any more. I am going right off to make a complaint and get him sent to the lock-up and jail," says he.

Chles.—That will do, you fool. I don't want to hear any more now; just you go down to the bar and tell him that I want my dinner. I never saw such an unmannerly dog as he is.

Oss.—Well, I had better ask the landlord to step up here himself, hadn't I?

Chles.—What the devil do I want with the landlord! Go yourself and tell him.

Oss.—All right, sir, but—

Chles.—Well, go and call the landlord then! Confound you!
(Exit Ossip.)

Chles.—I say, it is an awful thing to feel hungry like this! I took a little walk in the hope that my appetite would go; not a bit of it, confound it! If only I hadn't played the fool at P nza I should have had lots of money to get home with. Tha line captain did me awfully; he had a most extraordinary knack of turning up the king, the beggar! We were only at it a quarter of an hour, and he cleaned me out completely. It was a regular do. But all the same, I would give anything to have another shot at him. However, there doesn't seem much chance of that. What a beastly little town this is; they won't give you anything on tick in the shops. It's simply disgusting! (Whistles a bit of "Robert the Devil," and breaks off into something else.) Well, no one seems to care about coming here.

Enter Ossip and the Waiter of the Inn.

Waiter.—The landlord has sent me to ask you what you want.

Chles.—Hallo! old fellow, how are you? Pretty well, eh?

Wait.—Yes, thanks.

Chles.—And how's business? Everything going on all right in the inn?

Wait.—Yes, thanks, all right.

Chles.—Lots of travellers, eh?

Wait.—Yes, fair number.

Chles.—I say, my good fellow, you haven't brought me my dinner yet, just tell them to hurry up; I have got some work to do directly after dinner.

Wait.—The landlord says he is not going to supply you any more. In fact, he thinks of going to-day to the Prefect to lodge a complaint.

Chles.—Why, what has he got to complain about, what humbug! Judge for yourself, my good friend. I shall simply die of exhaustion, I am most awfully hungry, I am speaking quite seriously, I can tell you.

Wait.—Can't help that. The landlord said he won't supply you with nothing more till he is paid for all you have had. That's what he said.

Chles.—Oh, just you talk him over: bring him to reason.

Wait.—What's the good of telling him all this?

Chles.—Explain to him seriously that I really require food. As for the money, oh! of course that will be all right, you know. He thinks I am like some infernal pheasant or other and can go a day or two without anything to eat. Nice idea that.

(Exit Ossip and Waiter.)

Chles.—All the same, it is a bad look-out if he won't give me anything to eat at all. I never felt so hungry before in all my life. Shall I turn some of my clothes to account? Shall I sell my breeches? No! I am blessed if I will. I would rather starve than not come home with a Petersburg costume. What a nuisance Joachim didn't let me have a private carriage. It would have been grand to come home in a carriage—drive up straight to the steps of the house of some neighboring squire, with lamps burning and Ossip perched up behind in livery. By Jove! wouldn't I have astonished their

weak minds. "Hallo! whose turn-out is this?" they would all say, and a footman comes out in livery all over gold braid. "Ivan Alexandrovitch Chlestakoff from St. Petersburg. At home, sir!" The clumsy lout does not even know what the phrase means "At home." When some dunder-headed country squire comes to pay a visit he blunders straight into the drawing-room like a bear. Then up I go to some pretty little daughter of the house, "Mademoiselle how charmed I am." (Spits.) I feel perfectly sick with hunger.

Enter Ossip and the Waiter.

Chles.—Well.

Ossip.—They're bringing dinner.

Chles.—Hurrah; hurrah!

Waiter.—The landlord says it's the very last time he'll ever supply you.

Chles.—Oh, the landlord be damned! What have you got there?

Wait.—Soup and joint.

Chles.—What! only two courses?

Wait.—That's all.

Chles.—Pretty state of things. I won't stand this. Ask him what the devil he means by it! This is nothing of a dinner.

Wait.—Well, the landlord says it's a great deal.

Chles.—Why, isn't there any sauce?

Wait.—No, there isn't any.

Chles.—But why not? When I passed the kitchen I saw them getting lots of things ready, and this morning when I was in the coffee-room, there were two dapper little fellows eating salmon and lots of other things.

Wait.—Well, there is some if you like, and yet there isn't.

Chles.—How do you mean, "there isn't?"

Wait.—Well, I mean there isn't any for you.

Chles.—Here, I want some salmon, some fish, and some cutlets.

Wait.—Oh, that's for them that pays.

Chles.—You scoundrel, you!

Wait.—Yes, sir!

Chles.—You damned little brute, you! Why should they have nice things to eat and not I? Why the devil shouldn't I have them, too? Ain't they simple travellers like myself?

Wait.—No, of course not. Every one knows that.

Chles.—What sort of people are they then?

Wait.—Why, ordinary kind of people, to be sure; they pay their bills and you don't.

Chles.—Well, I am not going to argue with an idiot like you. (Ladles out the soup and begins to eat.) What soup this is! You've just poured some water into a cup; there's no taste about it, only a bad smell. I won't have this soup, bring me another sort.

Wait.—All right, I'll take it away; the landlord says if you don't like it you can go without.

Chles.—(Protecting the soup-tureen with his hand.) No, no! Hold on, you fool! You don't humbug me like that. None of your larks, don't you try that on. O Lord! what a soup this is! I don't believe any one has ever eaten soup like this before, it has got feathers in it instead of fat! (Cuts off a piece of the fowl in the soup.) Oh! I say, what a tough old hen this is! Here, give me the joint. There's little soup left; take it for yourself, Ossip. (Cutting the joint.) What kind of joint is this? It is not a joint at all.

Wait.—Well, what is it then?

Chles.—Goodness only knows what it is. It is not a joint, that's all I know. I believe it is an axe warmed up instead of meat—the swindlers! This is the sort of thing they give people to eat—a single mouthful of it would make one's jaws ache. The scoundrels! It's just like the bark of a tree, one can't get it out of one's teeth anyhow. And it turns them quite black. (Wipes his mouth with a napkin.) Is there anything more coming?

Wait.—No, sir, nothing more!

Chles.—The damned scoundrels! If they had given me some sauce now, or some pastry; this is the way they fleece travellers, the rogues!

(Exit Waiter, struggling with Ossip for the remains of the dinner)

Chles.—I swear I feel as if I hadn't eaten anything, just whetted my appetite, that is all! If one had but a few coppers now just to send into the street, and buy a roll or something of that kind.

Enter Ossip.

Ossip.—I say, the Prefect has come here and is making inquiries and is asking about you.

Chles.—(In a fright.) Oh, the devil! It is all up! That brute of a landlord has gone and made his complaint already. I say, fancy if he really does drag me off to prison! Well, if they did it in a gentlemanly kind of way, I don't know if I should much mind. No, I am hanged if I will though. There are the officers and fellows lounging about the streets, and I have been putting on any amount of side, and am already on winking terms with the shopkeeper's daughter. No I won't go. What the deuce does he mean, indeed? How dare he? I am not a tradesman nor a mechanic to be treated like this. I will just have it out with him. I will say, "What do you mean, you——"

(During this scene Bobchinsky keeps gently opening the door and looking in, with a leer of immense curiosity.)

Enter Prefect and Dob.

Prefect.—(Trembling throughout.) I take the liberty of wishing you good morning!

Chles.—Much obliged, I am sure.

(At first he is alarmed, but gets bolder as the interview goes on, and he observes the Prefect's trepidation.)

Pre.—You will excuse me——

Chles.—No necessity.

Pre.—It is my duty as the head of this town to see that proper attention is paid to all travellers and distinguished people who honor us—hum! hum——

Chles.—Well, what was to be done? It is not my fault. I will pay up! I will really! They will send me money from the country. It's the landlord you ought to drop on, not me! He gives me such infernally tough beef, and as for his soup, heaven knows what he puts into that. I had to chuck it out of the window. He starves me for whole days, and as for the tea, it is such queer stuff, it smells of fish. Why should I—Pretty state of things!

Pre.—Really, I hope you will not blame me; it is really not my fault. I always see that they keep first-class meat in the market—it is brought by cattle dealers from Holmogonia, and they are sober, respectable men. I don't know where the landlords get such bad meat from, but if there is anything wrong, allow me to suggest that you should come with me to some other quarters.

Chles.—No, none of that! I know what you mean by "other quarters." You mean the jail. What right have you, how dare you! Do you know I am in the Government service at St. Petersburg, and I'll—I'll——

Pre.—(Aside.) Lord! What a temper he has got; he has heard of everything, those damned shopkeepers have told him all about me.

Chles.—I don't care, you may bring me your whole posse of constables if you like. I won't go. I will appeal straight to the Minister, I will. What do you mean, sir, what do you mean? (Thumps the table with his fists.)

Pre.—Oh! for Heaven's sake don't be angry with me! Have pity on me, on my wife, and my little ones. Don't bring me to ruin.

Chles.—I tell you I won't go, pretty thing, indeed! What have I got to do with it? Because you have got a wife and children I am to go to jail, eh? No, thank you, I won't go.

Pre.—(Trembling.) It was all my inexperience, I swear it was all owing to my inexperience, the inadequacy of my salary; be pleased to judge for yourself. The salary the government gives me doesn't suffice to buy tea and sugar, and if

there were a few bribes, they only amounted to a mere trifle, some little thing for the table, a suit of clothes or so. And as for the non-commissioned officer's wife who has taken to keeping shop, they say I flogged her; it is a base slander, I swear, a perfect libel; it is an invention of my enemies, evil-doers who are ready to make attempts on my very life.

Chles.—Well, what the deuce have I got to do with all that? I don't know what you are talking about, with your evil-doers and your non-commissioned officer's wife; a non-commissioned officer's wife is one thing—you may flog her if you like, but you daren't flog me; pretty joke, that. Take care what you are about; I will pay up, I tell you. I will pay up, all right. I have not got any money just at this moment; that's why I am stuck here, because I have not got a farthing in my pocket.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, a deep game, this. What a way he has gone about; what a precious mystification he has made! Who would have seen through it? One doesn't know how to take him! Well, it is time to make an attempt. Worth trying, at any rate; well, here goes. (Aloud.) If you are in any want of money or anything else, I am at your service at any moment; it is my duty to assist travellers.

Chles.—Well, lend me some money, then. Lend it to me, and I will pay off my bill here at once. Two hundred rubles would be enough, or even less.

Pre.—(Giving him money.) There are exactly two hundred rubles; don't trouble to count them.

Chles.—Many thanks; extremely obliged. I will send you the money from the country as soon as I get there. I see now you are a good sort of fellow. Now we're all right.

Pre.—(Aside.) Thank heaven he has taken the money. Now affairs will go on all right. I gave him four hundred instead of two hundred.

Chles.—Here, Ossip!

Enter Ossip.

Call the waiter here. Why do you stand, gentlemen? Pray be seated, pray be seated!

Pre.—Oh, no; we'd rather stand.

Chles.—No, sit down; do! I see now you are first-rate good fellows. I confess that I thought at first that your object in coming here was to take me to—— (To Dobchinsky.) Pray take a chair. (Prefect and Dobchinsky sit down.)

Pre.—(Aside.) I must be bolder; he evidently wants to keep up his incognito. All right, we will humor him; we will pretend that we have not the least idea who he is. (Aloud.) We were taking a walk on business, Peter Dobchinsky and I, and we looked in at the inn only to see if the travellers are being properly looked after; for I am not like some prefects, who don't look after things at all. I do it out of pure Christian charity. I go beyond my duty. I wish that every living soul should be properly received in this town. And now, as if in reward, chance has given me the pleasure of making such an agreeable acquaintance.

Chles.—I'm sure I am very pleased myself; if it hadn't been for you I should have had to stay here some time. I really didn't know how to pay my bill.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, that is good! he didn't know how to pay his bill. (Aloud.) Might I venture to ask what place you will be pleased to visit on leaving here?

Chles.—I am going to the Saratoff district, to my own place.

Pre.—To the Saratoff district. (Aside.) Ha! ha! he doesn't even blush. Oh, we must keep our weather eye open with this fellow. (Aloud.) You have undertaken a charming trip; as to the roads, now, on the one hand they say it is not pleasant, as one is often delayed in getting horses. Then, on the other hand, there is plenty of diversion. I take it you are travelling simply for your own good pleasure.

Chles.—No, my father has sent for me; the old man is annoyed that I have not got on well in the service at St. Petersburg; he has an idea that the moment you get there you get the Vladimir in your button-hole at once; that is not the case exactly. I should like to send him to cool his heels in the Home office.

Pre.—(Aside.) Oh, that is his dodge, eh? He works in even his old father. (Aloud.) Will you be pleased to be absent a long time?

Chles.—Really, I don't know. My father is as obstinate and stupid as a mule. I shall tackle him at once; I shall tell him plainly it is all very well, but I cannot live out of St. Petersburg. Why should I go and waste my existence among a lot of peasants? It is not good enough. My soul craves for something more festive.

Pre.—(Aside.) A fine story he has concocted; he tells lie after lie, and never breaks down; and such a wretched little fellow! One would think one could press the life out of him with one's finger-nails; but wait a bit—he will let out something soon. I will soon get him to talk more at large. (Aloud.) Your observation is perfectly correct. What can one do in the provinces? Now, just look at us here, for example: at night I can't sleep; I am always thinking about the duty I owe to my country; I spare nothing in my country's service, and heaven knows when I shall get the reward for it. It seems to me this room is a little damp, eh?

Chles.—It's a horrid room; the bugs—I have never seen such beasts; they bite like dogs.

Pre.—You don't say so! Dear! Distinguished guests to suffer, and from what? From some abominable bugs that never ought to have seen the light of day at all. And the room is rather dark, isn't it?

Chles.—Yes, dark as pitch; the landlord has a cheerful habit of not giving me any candles. Sometimes I want to do something—to read a bit, or I have a fancy to jot down something that has come into my head—and I can't do it, it is so dark, dark!

Pre.—Might I venture to ask you—but no, the honor would be too great.

Chles.—What?

Pre.—No, no, it is too much to ask, too much!

Chles.—What is it?

Pre.—Might I venture? I have got a charming room for you in my house, cheerful and quiet; but no—I really feel it to be too great an honor; pray forgive me. It is out of mere simplicity of heart that I venture to suggest such a thing.

Chles.—On the contrary, I should be delighted, I am sure. It would be much pleasanter in a private mansion than in this pot-house.

Pre.—Oh, how pleased I shall be! And my wife—how delighted she will be! That is just my character, to show hospitality. It always was from my childhood, especially to such distinguished persons as yourself. Don't think that this is flattery—oh, no! that is not one of my faults—I speak out of the fullness of my heart.

Chles.—Very much obliged, I am sure. I do like people who are not humbugs; there is something about you so nice and open-hearted, I really am delighted with. And really all I ask for is respect and devotion, devotion and respect.

Enter Waiter, followed by Ossip.

Waiter.—Were you pleased to send for me?

Chles.—Yes; bring the bill.

Wait.—Oh, I have given you the bill over and over again.

Chles.—I don't remember your damned bills. How much is it altogether?

Wait.—You were pleased to order dinner on the first day, then on the second you had a little salmon, and afterward everything was on tick.

Chles.—You fool! adding it all up again. What is the total?

Pre.—Pray don't trouble yourself about him; he can wait. (To Waiter.) Get out of this; get out; the money will be sent. (Threatens the Waiter, who bolts out.)

Chles.—Oh, well, of course, that is all right.

(Exit Waiter.)

Pre.—Would you like to inspect, now, some of the institutions of our town, such as the hospital and things of that kind?

Chles.—Well, what have you got in that line?

Pre.—You can see how these things are managed here—what admirable order everything is in.

Chles.—Oh, certainly, with pleasure. I am quite ready.

Pre.—And then, if you like, we might go to the district schools, and you will see how we look after education in this town.

Chles.—Certainly, certainly.

Pre.—And afterward you might like to inspect the convict prison and the jail, and see how we treat our criminals.

Chles.—No, no; why the jail? Much rather have a look at the hospital—like that better.

Pre.—Just as you please. Will you go in your own carriage, or will you come with me in my droschky?

Chles.—I had better go with you in your droschky.

Pre.—Now, then, Peter, there will be no room for you.

Dob.—All right; I will manage somehow.

Pre.—Look here. (To Dobchinsky.) You run as fast as you can lay legs to the ground, and take two notes—one to Zemlianka at the hospital, and one to my wife. (To Chlestakoff.) Might I venture to ask permission to write a line to my wife in your presence, just to enable her to get ready for our distinguished guest?

Chles.—Oh, by all means. Here is some ink. As to paper, I don't know. Could you write on that old bill?

Pre.—Yes, that will do. (Writes, and at the same time says to himself:) And then we will see how things go on after breakfast and after a good fat bottle of wine. Oh, we have got some old government Madeira, not much to look at, but it would make an elephant roll about on his pins. All I want to find out is what sort of a personage he is—what we have got to fear from him. (Bobchinsky looking in at the door; the door suddenly comes off its hinges, and he falls into the room on his face.)

Chles.—Hallo! I hope you have not hurt yourself anywhere!

Bob.—Oh, no, not a bit; nothing at all! Just rubbed the skin off my nose a bit, that is all! I will run to the doctor; he has got some plaster for this sort of thing. It will soon pass.

Pre.—(Shakes his finger at Bobchinsky, and says to Chlestakoff:) It's nothing! I beg most respectfully that you will do me the honor to accompany me. I will tell your servant to

take your luggage up to my house. Here, my good fellow, take your master's things up to the Prefect's house—any one will show you where it is. Now I am at your service. (To Bobchinsky.) You fool, couldn't you find some other place to tumble down in? But you must needs go and lie full length on the floor like I don't know what!

ACT III.

Scene.—A room in the Prefect's house.

Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Anna.—Well, here we are waiting a whole hour, all owing to your ridiculous vanity. Are you quite dressed by this time, eh? Or do you want to go and fuss about your toilet again? One ought not to listen to her at all! How tiresome! Not a soul to be seen. As if on purpose to spite one, the whole place seems to have gone to sleep.

Maria.—Really, mamma, we shall hear all about it now in a couple of minutes. Avdotia must be back directly. I say, mamma, I say, there is some one coming—there, just at the end of the street!

Anna.—Where is some one coming? One of your stupid fancies again, I suspect. Well, yes, I see there really is some one coming. Who is it? He is short, and has got a frock coat on. Who can it be? What a nuisance it is! Who on earth can it be?

Maria.—Why, it's Dobchinsky, mamma.

Anna.—It is not Dobchinsky. Nonsense! You are always imagining something. It is not Dobchinsky at all. Here! you come here. Quick! Quick!

Maria.—It is Dobchinsky really, mamma!

Anna.—There you go on again. Anything to contradict. I tell you it is not Dobchinsky.

Maria.—Didn't I say so? There, mamma, now you see it is Dobchinsky.

Anna.—Oh, well, yes! I see now it is. What do you keep on disputing about it for? (To Dobchinsky.) Quick! make

haste! how slow you are! Well, where are they, eh? Shout out to me from there. It's all the same. I say, is he very stern, eh? Where is my husband, eh? How stupid he is! He won't tell us anything till he gets into the room.

Enter Dobchinsky.

Now for heaven's sake tell us. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? I trusted entirely to you. I thought at all events you were a decent sort of creature. The others have all rushed off, and you must needs run after them, and I have not heard a word of sensible explanation from any of them yet. Ain't you ashamed of yourself? Here have I stood godmother to your children, and this is the way you treat me!

Dobchinsky.—My dear friend, I tell you I have run for your sake until I am perfectly out of breath. My respects to you, Maria Antonovna.

Maria.—How are you, Peter Ivanovitch?

Anna.—Well, tell us now—tell us what is going on there.

Dob.—Anton Antonovitch has sent you this letter.

Anna.—Yes, but—but—tell us what sort of man is he. Is he a general?

Dob.—No, he is not a general, but I am sure he is every bit as good. Such education, such imposing manners he has got!

Anna.—Oh, then he is the very man they wrote about to my husband, eh?

Dob.—Of course he is the very man. We were the first to discover him—Peter Ivanovitch and I.

Anna.—Well, tell us all about it—do.

Dob.—Thank heaven, everything is going on first rate. At first he was disposed to be a little severe on Anton Antonovitch. Yes, indeed, he felt angry, complained of everything in the inn, said that he would not come to his house, that he was not going to be put in prison on his account. However, afterward, when he saw that it was really not Anton Antonovitch's fault, and with a little talking over, he changed his tone, and, thank heaven, everything went off capitally. They have gone now to inspect the hospital—though at first, indeed, the prefect

thought there really had been some secret report made against him. I declare I was rather afraid myself.

Anna.—What have you got to be afraid of? You are not in the service of the government.

Dob.—No, but still, you know, one is apt to feel alarmed when a great man like that speaks.

Anna.—What for? That is all rubbish. Tell us, what is he like? Is he old or young?

Dob.—A young fellow—quite a young fellow. Not more than twenty-three, but he talks quite like an old man. He says "Oh, certainly!" and "I will go there—and there—and there," all with such a lordly air. "I am fond of writing and reading," says he, "but am hindered in my work," says he, "because the room is rather dark."

Anna.—What is he like? Is he dark or fair?

Dob.—He is rather dark, with such flashing eyes, just like a wild animal's. One gets awfully confused under them.

Anna.—Well, we will see what my husband has to say for himself: "I hasten to tell you, my love, that things were going terribly badly with me, but now, trusting to the mercy of God for two salted cucumbers and half a portion of caviare, one ruble, twenty-five kopecks." I don't understand a word of it. What is he after with his salted cucumbers and his caviare?

Dob.—Oh! Anton Antonovitch wrote it on a dirty piece of paper in a hurry. This is some old bill.

Anna.—Ah, yes! I see; exactly. So it is! (Reads again.) "Trusting to the mercy of God, it seems now that everything will turn out all right. Make haste and get the spare room ready for a distinguished guest—the room with the yellow paper. You need not get anything extra for dinner, because we shall feed at the hospital with Artemie Phillipovitch, but get in some more wine, and tell the shopkeeper Abdulin to send the very best he has. If he does not, I will dig up his cellar for him. Good-bye, my love. Always your fond husband, Anton." Dear me! We must make haste. Who is there, Meeshka?

Enter Meeshka.

Dob.—Meeshka! Meeshka!

Anna.—Look here, Meeshka, run to Abdulin's shop—no, wait a moment; I will give you a line to him. (Writes.) There, give this note to Seedor, the coachman, and tell him to run to Abdulin's shop, and you go at once and get the room all ready for the guest. Put up the bed and the washstand and everything. (Exit Meeshka.)

Dob.—Well, I will run off now and see how they are getting on with their inspection.

Anna.—All right—off you go. I don't want to keep you. (Exit Dobchinsky.) Now, then, Maria, my dear, comes the business of the toilet. Remember he is a Petersburg swell. I only hope he won't see anything to laugh at in us. You had better wear your blue frock with the small flounces.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Not the blue. I don't like it at all. Miss Liapkin Tiapkin always goes about in blue, and Zemliankia's daughter, too. She's always in blue. Let me put on the frock with the flowery pattern.

Anna.—Flowery pattern, indeed! That's just like you! Never agree to anything I say. Just for the pleasure of contradicting! You had much better put on the blue, because I want to come out in my straw-colored dress. I do like that straw-colored dress so much.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! that doesn't suit you a bit.

Anna.—Doesn't suit me a bit, you say?

Maria.—No, not a bit. I will wager anything you like it does not. You want dark eyes to wear a dress of that color.

Anna.—Mighty fine! And do you mean to say that my eyes are not dark? I tell you they are—as dark as can be! What nonsense you are talking! How should they be anything else, when I always tell my fortune at cards by the Queen of Clubs?

Maria.—What, mamma? You generally go by the Queen of Hearts.

Anna.—You are talking perfect nonsense. I never have gone by the Queen of Hearts in my life. What an idea to get into your head all at once! The Queen of Hearts, indeed! I never heard such a thing. (Anna and Maria go out.)

Meeshka comes in on one side, and Ossip, carrying a portmanteau, on the other.

Ossip.—Which is the way?

Meeshka.—Here, old fellow, here!

Oss.—Hold on! Let's have a moment's rest. Oh! what a wretched life this is—when your inside's empty, every load seems heavy!

Mee.—I say, old chap, will the general be here soon?

Oss.—What do you mean by the general?

Mee.—Why, your master.

Oss.—My master! You think he is a general, eh?

Mee.—Isn't he?

Oss.—Oh, yes! He is a general—t'other way about.

Mee.—But is he more of a swell than a real general, or not?

Oss.—Oh! a lot more.

Mee.—Oh! that is it. Well, you have roused us up a bit.

Oss.—Look here, young man. I see you are a clever sort of fellow. Just get us something to eat.

Mee.—But there is nothing ready for you yet. You are too much of a swell to eat plain dishes, but when your master gets his dinner you will have yours.

Oss.—But what have you got in the way of plain dishes?

Mee.—Well, there is cabbage soup, porridge and meat pie.

Oss.—Oh! then, I say, just you give us some cabbage soup, porridge and meat pie. Never mind, I can eat anything. Here—just carry up the portmanteau. Is there any way out there?

Mee.—Yes.

(Exeunt Ossip and Meeshka.)

Enter Chlestakoff, followed by the Prefect, Artemie Phillipovitch, Luka Lukitch and Bobchinsky.

Chlestakoff.—Capital hospital! I like your custom of showing the chief objects of interest in your towns to travellers. In other towns they didn't show me anything.

Prefect.—In other towns, I think I may venture to state, the authorities and officials are principally occupied in looking

after their own interests, whereas here I may fairly say that the only motive that actuates us is the hope of obtaining the favorable notice of the government by our good conduct and the attention we bestow on our public duties.

Chles.—That was a first-rate breakfast you gave me. I made a hearty meal. Is that the kind of thing you have every day?

Pre.—No; it was expressly prepared for our honored guest.

Chles.—I do like good feeding; that is what life was given to us for—to cull all the flowers of pleasure. What is the name of that fish?

Artemie.—Dried sturgeon.

Chles.—Remarkably tasty fish. Where was it we had breakfast? In the hospital, wasn't it?

Art.—Precisely so—in that charitable institution, the hospital.

Chles.—I remember. Of course there were lots of beds there. By the way, have all the patients got well? It seems to me there were not many of them there.

Art.—About ten—not more. The rest have all got well. That is owing to our admirable management and our excellent organization. From the very moment when I took charge of the institution, you would hardly believe it, all the patients began to die—get well, I mean to say—like flies. A sick man no sooner comes into the hospital than he is well at once, and this happy result is not so much due to the medicines we employ as to our watchful care and attentive management.

Pre.—I need hardly assure you how arduous are the duties which devolve on the head of the town. The charge of every conceivable department of public business, the cleaning, the repairing, the arranging—in a word, such a mass of duties as would almost drive the most able administrator to despair; but (lifting his eyes), thanks be to heaven, everything is carried on in the most satisfactory manner. Any other prefect in my position would be taken up with looking after his own profit; but, believe me when I tell you, I never lay me down to rest without thinking to myself—Gracious heavens! how shall I manage so that the government shall see my zeal in their ser-

vice and approve my efforts? Whether I am to be rewarded for my conduct or not, that, of course, I leave altogether in the hands of the government; but at all events, I have the reward of a clear conscience. When the town is all in perfect order, the streets swept, the prisoners well looked after, hardly any cases of drunkenness, what more can I want? Ah, well! I ask for no honors; they are no doubt pleasing to the recipient, but as compared with virtue they are but dust and ashes.

Art.—(Aside.) Oh, the scoundrel! Just listen to him romancing! I wish Providence had given me the gift of the gab like that!

Chles.—Yes, that's quite true! I must confess I rather like to dabble in literature, sometimes to throw off some little thing in prose, sometimes even in verse.

Bobchinsky.—What a just observation—most just, isn't it, Peter Ivanovitch? What magnificent remarks these are! He is evidently a scholar!

Chles.—But tell me—have you not got some amusements here? Clubs, or something like that, where one could have, for instance, a game of cards if one wanted to?

Pre.—(Aside.) Ha! ha! my friend, we know what you're after now. (Aloud.) No, indeed! Heaven forbid! Institutions of this sort have never been heard of here. I myself have never even had a card in my hand. I really have not the faintest idea how to play at cards. I can't even look on at card-playing without feeling quite pained; and if my eye happens to fall on such a thing as a King of Diamonds, or any other card, I feel so utterly disgusted that it revolts me. Once it happened I was amusing the children, and I built a house of cards, and the accursed thing haunted me in my dreams the whole night afterward. Good heavens! I often wonder how people can waste valuable time in such amusements!

Luka.—(Aside.) Oh, the villain! And he took a hundred rubles out of me last night at baccarat!

Pre.—No, indeed! I find better employment for all the time I can get in working in the interests of the State.

Chles.—Well, no, I think you are wrong there. It all depends on the way you look at the matter. If, for instance, you stop when you have got a good hand and ought to bet all you

know—well, that is, I daresay—but still I like a game of cards sometimes, I must admit.

Enter Anna and Maria.

Pre.—Allow me to present to you my family—my wife and daughter.

Chles.—How fortunate I am to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance, madam!

Anna.—It is a still greater pleasure for us to have the opportunity of welcoming so distinguished a personage as yourself.

Chles.—Excuse me, madam, quite the contrary; the pleasure is all on my side.

Anna.—How can you say so? How kind and complimentary you are! I beg you will take a chair.

Chles.—It is happiness for me even to stand near you. However, if you insist upon it, I don't mind sitting down. How delighted I am to find myself with you at last!

Anna.—Oh, really! I can't think that you can really mean that. After life at Petersburg you must have found travelling so disagreeable.

Chles.—Well, it is certainly awfully disagreeable. My usual life, comprenez vous, is in the gay world of fashion, and then all at once to find myself on the road, filthy inns dark as pitch; if it hadn't been for the happy chance that—this makes up for everything.

Anna.—But, indeed, you must find it very disagreeable.

Chles.—Nevertheless, madam, at present I am perfectly happy.

Anna.—Oh, really! I am sure you are too kind. It is too great an honor for us!

Chles.—Not at all! Nothing could be too great an honor for you.

Anna.—I live in the country, you see.

Chles.—Ah, well, the country, you know, has its hillocks, its streams—of course, you can't compare it with Petersburg! There is a life for you! Perhaps you think I am drawing on

my imagination. But I tell you it is not that. The chief of the department is on the most friendly terms with me. He will slap me on the back and say, "Come along, old fellow; come and dine!" So I just go to the office for a couple of minutes, just to give directions, don't you know, just to tell them how things are to be done, and so on. As for the writing, there is an official there, a mere office hack, a kind of animated pen—tr—tr, on he writes. They wanted to make me assistant chief, but I thought it was not good enough. Then the porter runs after me up the stairs with a brush in his hand, "Allow me, Ivan Alexandrovitch," says he, "to brush your boots." Gentlemen, why are you standing? Sit down, I beg of you.

<i>Pre.</i> —	} (Together.)	{	We know our place better. We'd rather stand.
<i>Art.</i> —			Thanks, we'll stand!
<i>Luka.</i> —			Pray don't trouble yourself about us.

Chles.—Let us have no ceremony! I trust you will sit down. I don't like ceremony. On the contrary, I like to steal through the world unobserved; but one simply can't hide one's self. It is perfectly impossible. No sooner do I go out anywhere than I hear people saying, "There goes Ivan Alexandrovitch," and once they took me for the commander-in-chief, the sentries jumped out of the guard-house and presented arms. Afterward an officer, a great friend of mine, says to me, "I say, old fellow, do you know, we really took you for the commander-in-chief."

Anna.—Oh, I say; fancy that!

Chles.—I know all the leading actresses, and I have written vaudevilles, you know, and that sort of thing. I see a good deal of literary men. Pouschkin and I are like brothers. Sometimes I say to him, "Hallo, Pouschkin, old chap, how are you?" And he says, "Well, my boy, you know, so, so!" All that kind of thing, don't you know? He is a most original fellow!

Anna.—And so you are an author, too? How delightful it must be to be able to compose! I expect you write to the newspapers, don't you?

Chles.—Oh, yes, I write to the newspapers; but, indeed, I have written so many things—"Norma," "Figaro," "Robert le Diable," all little things of my own, and a lot more. I really can't remember their names. It's all as it were by chance. I don't want to write anything, but the managers of the theatres come to me and say, "Look here, old fellow, you simply must write something." And somehow or other, in a single evening, as it were, the whole thing gets written. Wonderful flow of ideas I have got. You know the works published under the name of Baron Brambeus: these are all mine.

Anna.—You don't say so! Only fancy that! Are you really Baron Brambeus?

Chles.—Oh, yes! I revised all those works. The publishers gave me a trifle of forty thousand rubles for them.

Anna.—Tell me, did you write "Youriee Miroslavsky?"

Chles.—Yes, that's a little thing of mine.

Anna.—I guessed as much at once.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Why, it's put on the title page that it's by Zagoskin.

Anna.—There you go again. I knew you'd find something to dispute about before long.

Chles.—Of course! Oh, that is quite true. Zagoskin did write one "Youriee Miroslavsky," and I wrote another.

Anna.—Yes, I thought so! And it was yours that I read. How well it is written!

Chles.—I confess I am a great hand at literature. Then there is my house. The best in Petersburg. Every one knows it. Ivan Alexandrovitch's house. I trust, gentlemen, that if ever you will come to Petersburg you will all come and look me up. I give balls there, too.

Anna.—Ah, I can imagine how perfectly tasty and splendid they must be!

Chles.—Fact, I assure you! On the table, for instance, there will be a watermelon costing a trifle of seven hundred rubles. The soup comes by steamer in a saucepan straight from Paris. You take off the cover—the steam of it is delicious—nothing like it in the world. I go out to balls every day. Then we have arranged little whist parties. The Minis-

ter for Foreign Affairs, the French Ambassador, the German Ambassador and myself. Oh, the jokes and fun we have at play! I tell you there is nothing like it. Then I just run upstairs to my apartments on the fourth floor, call out for the cook, "My overcoat, Mary"—what am I talking about, the fourth floor! Why, I am actually forgetting that I live on the first floor—why, the staircase alone cost me—yes, and then you should just look in at the entrance hall before I am up in the morning. Counts and princes jostling each other and murmuring like so many bees; all you can hear is buzz, buzz; sometimes the minister—I should tell you that they always address my letters as Your Excellency. I even took charge of the department once. Curious thing! Director had gone away, no one knew where; of course there were rumors and gossip as to who was to take his place. Numbers of generals willing enough—doesn't exactly do—easy enough at first sight—but when you come to look into it, the very devil! Well, nothing for it but to send for me. Couriers after couriers coming; imagine to yourselves thirty-five thousand couriers alone all waiting. "What is the matter?" I ask. "Ivan Alexandrovitch," they say, "you must go and take charge of the department." I confess I didn't quite like the job. I went out in my dressing gown and wanted to refuse. But I thought, "Well, all this will come to the emperor's ears, and it will be put in my record of service." "Very well, gentlemen," I said, "I will take charge, but I warn you, look out what you are about. I am all there; you'll find that I am down on you." Well, so it turned out! I go through the office like an earthquake, simply. Every one trembling and quivering before me like a leaf. Oh! I tell you, gentlemen, there is no humbug about me. I gave it them hot all round. Even the Council of State is afraid of me. That's the sort of man I am. I am no respecter of persons. I tell them all, "I know your little games, all of them; I am all there." I go to the palace every day. I expect to-morrow they will make me a field marsh—— (Slips gradually down from his chair; is respectfully supported by the surrounding officials.)

Pre.—(Trembling in every limb, and hardly able to speak.)
You, you—your ex——

Chles.—What'sh matter?

Pre.—You—you—your ex——

Chles.—Can't unshtand a word—all rot!

Pre.—You—you—your ex—excellency, would not—you—would your excellency like to lie down? Your room is ready. Everything you want——

Chles.—All rot. Lie down? Well, all right, if you like, I will go and lie down. Your breakfast, gentlemen, shplendid—very pleazhed—very pleazhed—dried sturgeon. (Reels off into side room, Prefect after him.)

Bob.—There, Peter Ivanovitch, there's a man for you! That is what I call a man. Never in my life have I been in the society of a great man like that! I nearly died of fright. What rank should you think he held, Peter Ivanovitch?

Dob.—I think he must be very near a general.

Bob.—Well, I think a general is not a patch on him; so if he is a general, he must be a generalissimo at least! Did you hear how he dropped on the Council of State? Let us make haste and tell Ammos Thedorovitch and Karobkin. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna.

Dob.—Good-bye, gossip.

Art.—(To Luka Lukitch).—It is simply awful, I declare, though I could not tell you why; and here, where are we? Not even in uniform. I only trust he will not make a report to St. Petersburg about that as soon as he wakes. Good-bye, madam.

(*Exeunt omnes, except Maria and Anna.*)

Anna.—Oh, what a delightful man!

Maria.—A darling creature!

Anna.—But what polished manners! You can see at once that he is a Petersburg gentleman—his ways and all his—How delightful! I do love young fellows like him, I declare I do, to distraction! I noticed he kept looking at me all the time.

Maria.—Oh, mamma! He kept always looking at me!

Anna.—Looking at you, indeed! There you go with your nonsense! Who ever heard of such a thing?

Maria.—It is quite true, mamma; he did look at me.

Anna.—Oh, there you go on! Heaven defend us! Anything for a dispute! But I have had enough of it, What should

he look at you for? What on earth should make him look at you?

Maria.—He did, mamma, the whole time, all the same. When he was talking about literature he looked at me, and then when he was describing how he played at whist with the ambassadors he looked at me again.

Anna.—Oh, I dare say just once in a way; I dare say he said to himself, "Poor little thing! I suppose I must bestow a glance upon her now for a change."

Enter Prefect.

Prefect.—Hush! hush!

Anna.—What is it?

Pre.—I am rather sorry I have made him drunk. Suppose that even only half of what he said is true—but it may be all true; when a man is drunk, out comes everything—every blessed thing he blurts out. Of course we know some of it was lies. No man can speak long without lying to some extent. But still he plays cards with the ministers and goes to court. I declare, the more one thinks of it—devil take it!—the more puzzling it is. One feels simply like a man on the bell-tower, or as if one was going to be hanged.

Anna.—Well, for my part, I don't feel in the least afraid of him; I simply regard him as a cultivated, well-bred man of the world. His rank is nothing to me.

Pre.—Oh, you women! That is just like a woman. When you have said that, you have said all. Everything is fiddle-faddle to women. Something suddenly sets them raving for no earthly reason. You thrash them, and, by Jove! the next moment they have forgotten the very existence of their husbands. My dear, you treated that young man with as much freedom as if he had been some Dobchinsky or other.

Anna.—Oh, don't worry yourself about that! We know something that— (Looking at Maria.)

Pre.—Well, it is no use talking to you. It is a queer go, anyhow. As yet I have hardly been able to open my eyes from fright. Meeshka, call the orderlies here. Derjimorda and Swestunoff are somewhere near outside. (After a slight pause.)

It is wonderful how things go in the world nowadays. If people were something to look at it would not so much matter; but a whipper-snapper like this—how is one to tell what he is? A soldier you know by his bearing, and as soon as he puts on a frock coat he is like a fly with his wings cut off. He lay so close for ever so long and made such extraordinary lying stories. It seemed as if it might take a century to get to the bottom of it all, and now, at last, he has let it all out with a run and has told us even more than is necessary. He is evidently very young, very young and green.

Enter Ossip.

(All through this scene, the Prefect is continually dragging his wife and daughter away from Ossip to the other end of the stage, and they continually return and interrupt again.)

Anna.—Come here, my good man.

Pre.—Hush! hush! What is the matter? He is asleep.

Ossip.—No, he is still stretching himself.

Anna.—Look here! What is your name?

Oss.—Ossip, mum.

Pre.—N—that'll do—that'll do! (To his wife.) Well I hope, my good fellow, they have treated you very well. (To Ossip.)

Oss.—Thank you kindly, sir, they have treated me very well.

Anna.—Tell us; I suppose a great many counts and princes come to see your master, eh?

Oss.—(Aside.) What is she after? Well, if they feed me well this time, perhaps they will feed me still better if I answer aright. (Aloud.) O yes, lots of counts.

Maria.—Dear Ossip, what a delightful man your master is.

Anna.—But tell me, Ossip, how does he—

Pre.—O, do be quiet—do, please! You only bother me with your stupid interruptions. Look here, my good fellow.

Anna.—What kind of rank does your master hold?

Oss.—Why, the usual kind of rank, you know.

Pre.—Oh, good heavens! You go on with your stupid questioning; you won't let me put in a word on business. Look here, my good fellow, what kind of a man is your master? Is he severe, or does he like to make things hot for one, or how?

Oss.—Yes. He likes to have everything in order—everything correct.

Pre.—There is something about your face that I like very much. I should think you were a good fellow. Now what—

Anna.—Look here, Ossip, when your master is in St. Petersburg, does he wear uniform or—

Pre.—Oh! do shut up with your nonsense; this is a rather important business matter which is going on here. A man's life depends on it. Now look here, my good fellow, it really is a fact that I like your face uncommonly. On the road I dare say you would not object to an extra cup of tea. It is cold now travelling. Here's a couple of rubles to get your cup of tea with.

Oss.—Thank your honor, I am much obliged. I am a poor man and your honor has helped me.

Pre.—O don't mention it. I am very pleased to do it. And now, my good man, what—

Anna.—Ossip, do tell us what kind of eyes does your master like best?

Maria.—Dear Ossip, what a love of a nose your master has got!

Pre.—Do shut up! Leave it to me. Look here, my good man, what does your master usually pay most attention to on the way? What is his particular fancy, I mean?

Oss.—Well, he likes as it happens according to circumstances, but what he looks out for more than anything else is that he should be well received himself and well fed.

Pre.—He likes good feeding, eh?

Oss.—Yes. I am only a poor serf, but still he is careful that I should be well fed, too. We got off somewhere. "Well Ossip," says he, "did they feed you well?" "No, your excellency," says I, "they didn't." "Ah, Ossip," says he, "he is a

bad host," says he, "that's what he is. Just remind me when we reach——" Ah, thinks I to myself, God be with him, I am a simple sort of man.

Pre.—All right—all right! You speak to the point. I gave you a trifle before to buy a cup of tea. Here is a trifle more to get a little mutton with.

Oss.—Oh! really your worship, I have done nothing to deserve it. Well, I will drink your honor's health.

Anna.—Come here, Ossip, I will give you something too.

Maria.—Ossip dear, kiss your master——

Pre.—For heaven's sake do stop your noise. Go to your rooms; you have talked enough.

Anna.—Come along, Maria, I have got something to tell you about our guest that can only be told when we are alone.

Pre.—Oh! talk away as much as you like. I don't want to hear, I will close my ears if you like. Now then, my good man——

Enter Derjimorda and Swestunoff.

Hush! You come trampling in with your heels like blundering bears, stumping along just like throwing a ton weight from a cart. What the devil brought you here?

Derjimorda.—In accordance with orders. (In a harsh voice.)

Pre.—Hush! How the raven croaks! According to orders, indeed! The words flow out from him as if they were coming out of a barrel. (To Ossip.) Well, my good friend, you go and get things ready there and ask for anything there is in the house; and you (to Derj. and Swes.) stand on the threshold and don't stir from the spot. Don't let anybody in the house, and especially shopkeepers. If you let in a single one, I'll——. The moment you get a glimpse of any one with a petition or even if he hasn't got a petition, if only he looks like a man who wanted to bring a petition against me, take him by the scruff of his neck and shove him out and kick him well, do you hear? Hush! hush!

ACT IV.

SCENE—The same.

Present Ammos Thedorovitch, Artemie Phillipovitch, the Postmaster, Luka Lukitch, Dobchinsky, and Bobchinsky, all in full uniform.

Ammos.—For heaven's sake, gentlemen, look sharp there! Stand all round in a circle in proper order! The Lord be with him! He goes to court and slangs the council of state! Put yourselves in military array. I insist on military rank and file. Peter Ivanovitch, you stand there.

Art.—As you please, Ammos. We shall have to do something, I suppose, eh?

Ammos.—But what are we to do?

Art.—As if we didn't all know.

Ammos.—What; grease his palm, eh?

Art.—Well, yes, grease his palm; something of that kind. He is dangerous—he might exclaim; he is a statesman; you might put it perhaps in the shape of a tribute of respect from the gentry—a memorial of some sort.

Post.—We might say, "Here is some money come by post and we don't know whom it belongs to."

Ammos.—You look out he doesn't send you posting further than you like. Look here! This is not the kind of way things are managed in respectable countries. What's the use of a whole squadron of us coming on him? We must introduce ourselves one by one in private, you know. Why, it's all as it should be, but mum's the word. That's the way things are done in polite society. You lead the way, Ammos Thedorovitch!

Ammos.—You had better. It was in your hospital that the great man broke bread with us.

Art.—I think Luka Lukitch had better go in first as an instructor of youth.

Luka.—I can't, gentlemen, really I can't. I was brought up so that if an official one single degree higher in rank than

I am speaks to me, I simply collapse and my tongue is of no more use than if it was stuck in the mud. Let me off, gentlemen, you really must let me off.

Art.—Yes, Ammos, no doubt you are the only man to do it. You can talk like a Cicero.

Ammos.—What do you mean? A Cicero? What an idea to get into your head! I admit that I am carried away sometimes talking of a leash of my own dogs or a bloodhound——

All.—No, no! You can talk about the Tower of Babel or anything as well as dogs. Don't desert us, Ammos! be a father to us. Come, come, Ammos!

Ammos.—Well, pluck up heart, gentlemen.

(At this moment footsteps and coughing heard in Chles's rooms. All rush for the doors, crowding together and trying to get out with some collisions; smothered exclamations or heard outside.)

Bob's voice.—Oh, oh! Peter, look out! You have trod on my toes.

Zem's voice.—Make room there, make room! You press so! Do look out! You have squeezed me to death!

(Various exclamations, Oh, oh, ah, ah, are heard.)

Enter Chles.

Chles.—Well, I think I have had a real good snooze. Where do they get such mattresses and featherbeds? They have regularly sweated me! I really believe they must have drugged me at breakfast yesterday! My head is spinning still! I think I can pass my time first-rate here. I like kindness, I declare I do, and I prefer to be entertained out of pure hospitality to anything else, and not from any interested motives. The prefect's daughter ain't half a bad girl. And as for the mother, I think one might—well, I don't know—all the same, it is not a bad life this!

Enter Ammos.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Heaven be gracious and bring me safely through it! My knees are simply giving way under me. (Aloud, drawing himself up and holding his sheathed sword

in his hand.) I have the honor to present myself, the judge of the District Court, Collegiate Assessor, Liapkin Tiapkin.

Chles.—Sit down, I beg. So you are the judge here, eh?

Ammos.—In 1806 I was elected by the nobility to the position for three years, and I have carried on the functions ever since.

Chles.—Made a good thing by it, eh?

Ammos.—I have been promoted to the fourth grade order of the Vladimir (thrusting his fist out sideways a little.) (Aside.) Good gracious! Merciful heavens! I don't know where I'm sitting! I feel as if I were sitting on hot coals.

Chles.—What is that in your hand?

Ammos.—(Losing his head altogether and dropping the paper money on the floor.) Nothing, nothing.

Chles.—It is something. I see you have let some money fall.

Ammos.—(Trembling all over.) Nothing, nothing at all! (Aside.) O Lord! Now I am about to receive sentence! Now the prisoners' van has come for me.

Chles.—(Picking it up.) Yes, it is money, certainly.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Now it is all up! I am a gone coon!

Chles.—Tell you what; suppose you lend me this?

Ammos.—Of course! of course! By all means! With the greatest pleasure. (Aside.) Now, then, pluck does it! The Holy Virgin pull me through!

Chles.—The fact is I spent all my money on the way. I will pay you back as soon as possible from home.

Ammos.—Don't mention it, I beg. Such an honor in any case. Certainly, as far as my humble powers go—zeal and energy in the service of government—I endeavor to deserve. (Rising and drawing himself up.) I won't detain you longer. You have no orders for me?

Chles.—What orders should I have?

Ammos.—I thought perhaps you might be pleased to give some instructions to the district judge.

Chles.—Why? You see, I have no need for him at present. No, thanks, nothing! Much obliged all the same!

Ammos.—(Aside.) Hurrah! The game is ours!
(Exit *Ammos.*)
Chles.—(Alone.) Not a bad fellow, the judge.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—I have the honor to introduce myself, Postmaster court councillor, Shpekin.

Chles.—Delighted, I am sure! I like good company. Sit down. Always live here, eh?

Post.—Yes, exactly so!

Chles.—Well, I like this little town. Not many people here, of course, but what of that. It is not the metropolis, is it, eh?

Post.—Certainly not; you are perfectly right.

Chles.—It is only at Petersburg one gets good form. Not among a lot of country bumpkins. What do you think? Is it not so?

Post.—Exactly so! (Aside.) Why, he is not proud a bit. He asks about everything.

Chles.—One can lead a very pleasant life in a small town after all; can't one, eh?

Post.—Exactly so, sir.

Chles.—What you want is people to respect you and like you sincerely; is that not so?

Post.—That is perfectly true.

Chles.—I am very glad, I confess, that you agree with me. People call me odd, that is just my way. (Aside.) Shall I ask this postmaster for a loan? (Aloud.) A curious thing has happened to me. I spent all my money on the road. You could not lend me three hundred rubles, could you?

Post.—Of course, of course, with the greatest pleasure! Here it is. I am perfectly ready to serve you, heart and soul!

Chles.—Thanks; very much obliged! I don't like to have to deny myself anything on a journey—why should one, eh?

Post.—Exactly so, sir! I will not venture to trouble you with my presence any longer. You have your directions to give in the postal department?

Chles.—No, nothing!

(Exit Postmaster.)

The postmaster doesn't seem half a bad fellow either—devilish obliging anyhow. I like people like him!

Enter Luka Lukitch.

Luka Lukitch.—I have the honor to introduce myself, the school director, titular councillor, Chlopoff.

Chles.—Delighted, I am sure. Sit down. Have a cigar?

Luka.—(Aside.) I didn't expect anything like this. Shall I take it or not?

Chles.—O, take it. These are fair cigars. Not, of course, equal to the Petersburg ones. There, my friend, I smoke cigars at twenty-five roubles a hundred, and you lick your fingers after them—they're first-rate. Here's a light. (Holding a candle. Luka tries to light up, but trembles.)

Chles.—Try the other end.

(Luka drops the cigar from fright; spits, and makes a gesture of despair.)

Luka.—(Aside.) The devil take it all! This cursed fright I am in has played the mischief with me.

Chles.—I see you're not a great hand at cigars. Now, it is my weakness, I confess; women are another great weakness of mine. Now, tell us, which do you like best—dark or fair?

(Luka completely at a loss what to say, is silent.)

Chles.—Now tell us, I say, which is it? Brunette or blonde?

Luka.—I don't venture to know.

Chles.—Now don't you get out of it. I must know your taste.

Luka.—I venture to report—(Aside.) I don't know what I am saying! My head is going round.

Chles.—Ha, ha! You don't want to confess. I suspect some little brunette has touched you up. Isn't it so, eh?

(Luka is silent.)

Chles.—Ha! ha! You blush! Look at him! Look at him! Why don't you tell me?

Luka.—I was afraid your Excel—(Aside.) This cursed tongue of mine has betrayed me.

Chles.—Afraid? Well, there's something in my eyes which inspires fear at all events. I know that no single woman can resist them. Isn't it so, eh?

Luka.—Exactly so!

Chles.—Curious thing happened to me. Spent all my money on the road. You couldn't lend me three hundred roubles, could you?

Luka.—(Aside.) Here's a pretty go if I haven't got it. Ah, here it is. (Makes a dash at his pocket, takes out the notes and gives them to Chles. trembling.)

Chles.—Thanks, much obliged!

Luka.—I will not venture to trouble you further with my presence.

Chles.—Good-bye!

(Exit Luka hurriedly, almost with a run.)

Luka.—(As he goes out.) Thank heaven that's over! Perhaps he won't look in at the schools now.

Enter Artemie.

Artemie Phillipovitch.—I have the honor to introduce myself, the manager of the hospital, Privy Councillor Zemlianka.

Chles.—How are you? Sit down, pray!

Art.—I had the honor of accompanying you and personally receiving you at your inspection of the institutions confided to my charge.

Chles.—Ah, yes, I remember, that was a first-class breakfast you gave us.

Art.—It is my delight to labor in the cause of my country.

Chles.—I admit if I have a weakness, it is good cookery. Tell me, you seem to have got rather taller since yesterday somehow, haven't you?

Art.—Very likely! I may premise that I spare nothing to perform my functions with zeal. But now (drawing his chair and talking in a low voice)—but now there's the post-master here, he does absolutely nothing. Lets everything

slide; keeps back letters; you investigate matters for yourself; and there is the judge who was with you just now. He is always out coursing hares and keeps dogs in the court house, and his conduct generally—if I may say so before you, and it is my duty to do so in the interests of the country, though he is my relation and friend—his conduct generally is most reprehensible. There is the squire here named Dobchinsky, whom you were pleased to see, and no sooner does Dobchinsky go out anywhere, than the judge goes and sits with his wife, and I am ready to swear that—

Chles.—Dear me, tut, tut! I had no conception of all this.

Art.—Then there is the school director. I don't know how the government could have trusted such a post to him. He is worse than a Jacobin, and puts such pernicious ideas into the boys' heads, you can't think. Would you like me to note down all those little things on paper for you?

Chles.—Yes, that will be the best way. I should like that. It will be amusing reading for some dull half hour. What is your name? I keep forgetting it.

Art.—Zemlianka.

Chles.—O yes, of course! Zemlianka. Got any children?

Art.—I should think so. Five of them already grown up.

Chles.—You don't say so! Grown up, eh? And what—and what are they like?

Art.—You mean—you wish to ask what their names are?

Chles.—Yes, what are their names?

Art.—Nicholas, Ivan, Elizabeth, Maria, and Perepatua.

Chles.—First-rate names.

Art.—I will not venture to trouble you any longer or occupy your time, which is marked out for sacred duties.

Chles.—O, never mind, don't mention it. Capital joke all that you have told me. Some other time, perhaps. That's the kind of thing I like. Hallo, I say! By the way, I keep on forgetting what your Christian name is.

Art.—Artemie Phillipovitch.

Chles.—By the way, Artemie, would you do me a little service? Curious thing, but I spent all my money on the

journey. Have you got four hundred roubles you could lend me?

Art.—Certainly, certainly!

Chles.—That's lucky! Thanks! Really very much obliged!
(Exit Artemie.)

Enter Rastakovsky.

Rastakovsky.—I have the honor to report myself, a resident in this town and land owner, retired Brevet-Major Rastakovsky.

Chles.—Pray be seated. I am delighted to see you. I am acquainted with your chief.

Ras.—Oh, so you were pleased to know Zadunaiskye.

Chles.—What Zadunaiskye?

Ras.—Count Rumyantseff Zadunaiskye, Peter Alexandrovitch, he was my late commander.

Chles.—Ah, yes, then you served some time ago?

Ras.—I was in the service at the time of the siege of Silistria in 1773. That was hot work. The Turks were as near us as this table is to me. I was a sergeant then; and there was a brevet-major in our regiment. Did you happen to know him, Grozdeff, Pétér Vassilievitch?

Chles.—Grozdeff? What Grozdeff?

Ras.—Peter Vassilievitch who was afterwards transferred to the Dragoons by special command of the late Emperor.

Chles.—No, I didn't know him.

Ras.—I thought, perhaps, you would not know him, because it is already more than thirty years ago since he died. His grand-daughter lives near here, about twenty versts away, married to Ivan Vassilievitch Cuckoldi.

Chles.—To a Cuckold? You don't say so! I had no idea of that.

Ras.—Yes; to Cuckoldi Ivan Vassilievitch. As I was saying, the Turks were as near us as this table. It was winter, and there was snow on the ground, and as much confusion as there was in the year when the French came into Moscow. There was another brevet-major in our regiment, Phikte Knabe, a German, they called him Siegfried Ivanovitch, but the com-

mander-in-chief at that time, Potemkin, ordered his name to be changed. "You are not Siegfried," he said, "you shall be called Soup Ivanovitch," and always after that he was called Soup Ivanovitch. Well, then, Soup Ivanovitch and Brevet-Major Grozdeff, whom I mentioned to you just now, were sent out to forage, and myself, too, was ordered to go with them, and a quartermaster, too. Perhaps you knew him, Trepakin, Avtamon Paulovitch; he died too about twenty-five years ago, I think.

Chles.—Trepakin; no, I didn't know him. But I was going to ask you—

Ras.—(Not hearing.) Fine fellow, red hair, golden shoulder strap, first-class hand at dancing polkas. He would clap his hands and carry off a couple from the colonel himself; and as soon as the girls—ha, ha, ha! we had tents then, and as soon as you put your nose into his tent—ha, ha! there he sat, and next morning the orderly brought him out like a dragoon in a three-cornered hat—ha, ha, ha! and his sword-belt hanging—ha, ha, ha!

Chles.—Yes; very similar thing happened to a friend of mine, an official who makes his service pay remarkably well. He was sitting in his dressing-gown smoking his pipe when suddenly a friend of mine came in, a guardsman of the Horse Guards, and said. (Stopping short and looking hard at Ras.) I say, by the way, you couldn't lend me a little money, could you? I spent all mine on the road.

Ras.—(Putting his hand to his ear.) Who did you say asked for money? Did the official ask the guardsman, or did the guardsman ask the official?

Chles.—No, I am asking you for some. You see I may forget it afterwards, so I thought I had better do it now.

(Rastakovsky here draws out his pocket handkerchief, and then unfolds it, Chlestakoff watching him eagerly; when he has unfolded the whole, he gives it a flourish, and blows his nose, Chlestakoff sinks back in his chair disgusted.)

Ras.—Oh, it's you that wants money, do you? Curious thing that. I thought it was the guardsman in that little story that asked for it. That happens sometimes in conversa-

tion. So you want some, eh? Now, I was going to ask you to do myself a favor.

Chles.—Well, what is it?

Ras.—I ought to get an extra pension, so I want you to give a hint to the senators or someone of that kind.

Chles.—All right, certainly, by all means.

Ras.—I gave in a petition myself, but I am not at all sure that I gave it in to the right place.

Chles.—How long ago was it since you sent in your petition?

Ras.—Well, to tell the truth it was not so very long ago. It was in 1801, and it was about thirty years ago, and no resolution has been passed on it yet. I sent it by a man named Sosulkin, Ivan Petrovitch, you know, who was going to Petersburg then, and he was not a very trustworthy man, and I think, perhaps, he didn't take it to the right place. Of course there can't be much longer delay, but still thirty years have passed and so I think it ought to be decided soon.

Chles.—O yes, of course, it will be soon decided now. However, I was going to ask you in my turn——

(*Ras.* goes out suddenly.)

Chles.—Well, well, all right! Good-bye!

Enter Dobchinsky and Bobchinsky.

Bobchinsky.—I have the honor to introduce myself, resident of this town, Peter Bobchinsky, son of Ivan Bobchinsky.

Dobchinsky.—I am Squire Peter Dobchinsky, son of Ivan Dobchinsky.

Chles.—Ah, I have seen you before. You are the fellow that tumbled down. How's your nose?

Dob.—Thanks, pray don't trouble yourself about it. It's healed over—quite healed over!

Chles.—Ah, it's a good thing it's healed over. I am very glad! Have you got (suddenly) any money about you?

Dob.—Eh, money? How do you mean?

Chles.—A thousand rubles—just as a loan!

Bob.—I declare I have not got as much; have you, Peter?

Dob.—I have not either. Fact is, I have put all my money into the savings bank.

Chles.—Oh, well, if you can't manage a thousand, lend me a hundred.

Bob.—(Feeling in his pockets.) Have you got a hundred roubles about you, Peter? I have only forty in paper money.

Dob.—Twenty-five is all I have got.

Bob.—Look again, Peter. You know there is a hole in your pocket on the right-hand side. Very likely some has fallen into that.

Dob.—No, I have looked there, there is none there.

Chles.—Never mind, it doesn't matter. Give me the sixty-five roubles—that will do! (Takes the money.)

Dob.—I venture to ask your assistance on a matter of great delicacy.

Chles.—What is it?

Dob.—Very delicate affair. My eldest son, you see, well, he was born before I got married.

Chles.—Oh, was he?

Dob.—Well, yes, you see, he was. Now, I want him to be legitimatized and to take my name Dobchinsky.

Chles.—All right, let him be called Dobchinsky, there is no difficulty in that.

Dob.—I would not have troubled you on the matter, but he is such a clever boy, wonderfully clever boy; he gives great promise; he can repeat poetry by heart; and if a pocket-knife happens to fall in his way, he can cut you out a little droschky as cleverly as a conjurer. Peter here knows all about it.

Bob.—O yes, he is a boy of great capacity.

Chles.—All right! All right! I will see about it! I may say, at least, I hope, we will manage that for you. Have you got anything to say to me?

Bob.—Well, yes, I have. Just the very smallest petition in the world.

Chles.—What is it?

Bob.—I would venture to ask you when you go to St. Petersburg, just tell all the bigwigs there, the senators and the admirals, like this, "Your Lordships, or your Excellency, in such and such a village there lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky." Just like that, you see, quite simply. "There lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky."

Chles.—All right, I will do that for you.

Bob.—And if you should happen to come across the Emperor, you might tell the Emperor too, just in the same way, "Lo! and behold! your Imperial Majesty, in such and such a town lives Peter Ivanovitch Bobchinsky."

Chles.—All right, certainly!

Dob and Bob.—(Together.) I hope you will excuse us for having trespassed on your valuable time.

Chles.—Certainly, certainly, delighted!

(*Exeunt Dob. and Bob.*)

Chles.—There seem to be a good many officials here. It appears to me they take me for some one connected with the government. Well, it is true I threw dust in their eyes yesterday. What tomfoolery it all is! I will write an account of this to Tryapitchkin—he will write an article about it. He'll hit them off splendidly. Here, Ossip! Give me paper and ink! By Jove! Tryapitchkin is a man you have got to look sharp with if you come in his way. He would not spare his own father if he could make a point out of him, and he is fond of money, too. However, these officials are good fellows enough. It is an admirable trait in their character lending me money like this! Let's see exactly how much I've got. Three hundred, that is from the judge; three hundred from the post-master, that is six, seven, eight—what greasy paper—eight, nine hundred! By Jove! over a thousand! I wish I could meet that captain again; I'd show him a trick or two.

Enter Ossip.

Well now, you fool, you see how they've received me and treated me? (Beginning to write.)

Ossip.—Yes, thank heaven! But I will tell you what, Ivan Alexandrovitch—

Chles.—Well, what?

Oss.—Get away from here. It is quite time we went, I swear.

Chles.—What humbug! Why?

Oss.—Why? The Lord be with them all. We have amused ourselves here for two days already, and that is enough. We must not stay with these people too long, damn them; it is risky! Times change and things may take a different turn. For God's sake, Ivan Alexandrovitch, let's be off. There are capital horses here and we will gallop away like anything.

Chles.—No; I like staying here—we will go to-morrow perhaps!

Oss.—Why put it off till to-morrow? For God's sake let us go, Ivan Alexandrovitch! For heaven's sake let us clear out! Although they give us great honor, don't you see they take you for someone else! And your father will be annoyed if you stay here. We could gallop away in first-rate style; they will give you the best horses.

Chles.—All right then, if you like! But take this letter over to the post first, and get the travelling pass at the same time. Just see that the horses are good, and tell the drivers that I will give them a whole rouble each to gallop like a special courier and to sing at the same time. I can imagine Tryapitchkin will die of laughing.

Oss.—All right, sir; I will send one of the people over with this, and I will go at once so as to lose no time.

Chles.—All right. Bring me a candle, that's all.

(Exit Ossip and speaks behind the scenes.)

Oss.—(Outside.) Here, I say, you fellow, take this letter to the post and tell the postmaster it's franked, and tell him my master wants the best postchaise with three horses that he has got, Imperial couriers, and it is not to be paid for, it's to go down to the expense of government—and look sharp, or else my master will be angry. Hold on! The letter isn't ready.

Chles.—I wonder where he lives now! Whether in Post Office street or Peascod street; he's always shifting his quar-

ters and leaving his bill unpaid. However, I'll send it on the chance to Post Office street.

(Ossip brings a candle and Chles. seals the letter. In the meanwhile Derjimorda's voice is heard outside.)

Derj.—(Outside.) Where are you coming to, old long beard? Don't you hear there's no admittance for anyone.

Chles.—(Handing the letter to Ossip.) Here, take it now!

Shopkeepers' voices outside.—Let us in, old fellow! You can't keep us out; we've come on business.

Derj.'s voice.—Off with you! He can't see you; he's asleep!

Chles.—What's that, Ossip? Just see what that row's about?

Oss.—There are some shopkeepers want to see you, and the orderly won't let them in. They are waving some papers, and they probably want to see you.

Chles.—(Goes to the window.) What do you want, my good people?

Shop. voice.—We have come to implore your mercy, my lord. Tell them to take our petition in.

Chles.—Let them in! Let them come in, Ossip! Tell them to let them in. (Takes the petition to the window and reads it.) "To His Most Excellent Worship, Mr. Finance, from the Shopkeepers Abdulin." What the devil does that mean? There is no such rank as Mr. Finance!

Enter several Shopkeepers.

Well, my good people!

Shopkeepers.—We have come humbly to implore your mercy.

Chles.—Well, what do you want?

Shop.—Save us, my Lord. We are suffering frightful oppression unjustly.

Chles.—Who from?

Shop.—From the Prefect here, my lord; there never has been such a Prefect. The way he tyrannizes over us is be-

yond description. He has reduced us to starvation with his billeting. We might as well be hanged at once. It is not for anything we have done wrong. He seizes one fellow by the beard, "Ah, you Tartar," he says. It is not as if we didn't treat him with respect. We always do our duty. Of course, we have to give dresses to his wife and daughter; we don't complain of that—but nothing satisfies him—indeed it doesn't. He comes into the shop and takes everything he sets eyes on. He sees a piece of cloth, "Hallo, my friend," says he, "that's nice cloth; just bring it up to me." Then you have to bring it, and there will be perhaps nearly fifty yards in the piece.

Chles.—Is it possible? What a scoundrel, eh?

Shop.—I swear to you nobody can remember a Prefect like him. You have to hide everything in the shop when he comes in sight. He is so indiscriminating, he will take any rubbish; even currants that have been lying in a barrel the whole summer, things that my shop boy would not touch; he will thrust his fist in and take a whole handful of them. His name-day is, of course, St. Anthony's Day, and one would think we gave him every mortal thing he could want then. But no; he asks for more, and then he says his name-day is on St. Onuphria's Day too. What is one to do! We must carry him everything on St. Onuphria's Day as well.

Chles.—By Jove! He's a regular robber, isn't he?

Shop.—That he is. If you only venture to say a word against it he'll bring a whole regiment and billet them on you, and then if you resist he orders the doors to be shut. "I'm not going to inflict corporal punishment," says he, "or torture you; that," says he, "is forbidden by law; but I will just see how many salt herrings you can eat, my fine fellow."

Chles.—What a blackguard, eh? Why, he ought to go to Siberia for this!

Shop.—Oh, never mind where he goes, your Excellency; send him anywhere, anywhere will do as long as it is far enough from us! But don't despise our bread and salt, your honor, we have brought you some sugar loaves and a hamper of wine as a gift of welcome.

Chles.—No, no, you mustn't think that. I never take bribes of any sort. But if now you were to offer me say three

hundred rubles as a loan, why that would be a different matter altogether; I could take that.

Shop.—Certainly, by all means, my lord! What's the use of three hundred, take five hundred; only help us!

Chles.—Very well, I have no objection at all. I will take five hundred.

Shop.—(Bringing the money on a silver salver.) And please accept the salver along with it.

Chles.—Well, I don't mind accepting the salver.

Shop.—And take the sugar too, just for once.

Chles.—O no, a bribe's a thing that I never—

Oss.—Your Excellency, why not take it? Do take it now. It'll all come in useful on the road. Here, give us the sugar-loaf and the sack. Hand over the whole lot, it will all come in useful on the road. What's that? A piece of rope. O, give us the rope as well. A piece of rope will come in handy on the way too. A carriage may break or something, and it will do to tie it up with.

Shop.—Do us the great favor. If you can't help us in what we ask, then there is nothing left but despair. We might as well put our heads into the noose at once.

Chles.—Well, I will do my best for you.

(*Exeunt shopkeepers.*)

Women's voices heard.

Voices.—I defy you to keep me out. I will complain to him myself about you! Don't shove so hard!

Chles.—(Going to the window.) Who is there? What do you want, my good woman?

Two Women's Voices.—We have come to implore your mercy, my lord; do listen to us, for mercy's sake!

Chles.—Let her in!

Enter a couple of women, Locksmith's Wife and the Non-Commissioned Officer's Wife. They throw themselves at Chles-takoff's feet and kiss them.

Locksmith's Wife.—Mercy, mercy, my lord!

Non-Commissioned Officer's Wife.—Mercy, mercy, my lord!

Chles.—Who on earth are you?

Non-Com.'s W.—I am the wife of the non-commissioned officer.

Lock.'s W.—I am the locksmith's wife, the artisan of this town, Febrona Petrova, my father—

Chles.—Hold on; speak one at a time. What do you want?

Lock.'s W.—Justice—justice against that Prefect! God send every possible evil on his children! May nothing prosper with him, the scoundrel! or with his uncles or with his aunts!

Chles.—Well, but what is it?

Lock.'s W.—He has had my husband's head shaved and sent him as a recruit to the army, though the lot didn't fall to us, the scoundrel! and it's against the law, too. He is a married man.

Chles.—How did he dare to do that?

Lock.'s W.—He did it, the blackguard! he did it! God punish him for it in this world and the next. May his aunt, if he has an aunt, come to utter grief; and his father, if he is still alive, may the beast die like a dog, or choke himself everlastingly, the damned scoundrel! He ought to have taken the tailor's son. He was a drunken lout anyhow, but his parents gave him a big present, so then he wanted to take the son of the shopkeeper, Mrs. Panteleevi. Mrs. Panteleevi likewise sent three bits of cloth to his wife, so then he came to me. "What do you want with a husband?" said he; "he's no good to you any more." I think I ought to know if he is any good or not; that is my affair, the blackguard! "He is a thief," says he; "if he has not stolen anything yet, it is all the same; he'll steal something before long; and even if he doesn't, he'll be taken to serve next year in any case." And what am I to do without my husband? the blackguard! May none of his relations ever see the light of heaven! and if he has got a stepmother by any chance, may his stepmother—

Chles.—Come, come; and you? (Turning to the old woman.)

Lock.'s W.—(Going out.) Don't forget, my darling. Be gracious!

Non-Com.'s W.—I have come to complain of the Prefect!

Chles.—Well, what is it all about? Tell me in a few words.

Non-Com.'s W.—He has had me flogged, your honor.

Chles.—What!

Non-Com.'s W.—It was all a mistake, my deary; the woman had a row in the market, and the police didn't come up in time to catch them, so they took me and reported me. I could not sit down for two days afterward.

Chles.—Well, but what can be done now?

Non-Com.'s W.—Why, there is nothing to be done, of course. I can't help my luck. Make him pay a fine for the mistake. The money would come in uncommonly useful just now.

Chles.—Very well, very well; now be off! I'll—I'll see about it. (Hands are thrust in at the windows with petitions.) Who is there besides? (Goes to the window.) I won't take them! I won't take them! It is no use! It is no use! Go away from the window! I am sick of them! The devil take it, don't let any more in, Ossip!

Oss.—(Calls out the window.) Be off, be off! It is not the time! Come to-morrow!

(The door opens as a queer figure in a frieze cloak appears, with swollen lips and cheek bunged up; behind him several others.)

Go away! Go away! Where are you coming to? (Pushing them out. Ossip shoves his fist into the stomach of the first, and slams the door after him.) (Exit Ossip.)

Enter Maria.

Maria.—Oh!

Chles.—What were you in such a fright about, mademoiselle?

Maria.—Oh, I was not in a fright at all!

Chles.—Oh, but allow me, mademoiselle; I am so pleased! Do you think I am the sort of a man to— But might I ask you where you were thinking of going to?

Maria.—I was not going anywhere.

Chles.—And how is it you were not going anywhere?

Maria.—I thought perhaps mamma was here; and—and——

Chles.—No, no; but I want to know why were you not going anywhere?

Maria.—I am afraid I interrupt you. You were engaged in important business.

Chles.—Your pretty eyes are better than all the important business in the world. You could not interrupt me—you really could not. On the contrary, you could only bring pleasure to me.

Maria.—Oh, that is the polite way they talk in St. Petersburg.

Chles.—I dare say they would to a lovely creature like you. Might I have the inexpressible happiness of handing you to a chair? But it is a throne you are fit for, not a chair.

Maria.—Oh, really, I don't know—I wanted so much to go. (Sits down.)

Chles.—What a pretty scarf that is you have got on!

Maria.—Oh, you are laughing at me! Anything to make fun of a poor little country girl.

Chles.—Oh, how I wish I was your scarf, so that I might be wound round your lily-white neck!

Maria.—I don't know what you mean at all. What are you talking about? What scarf? What curious weather it is to-day!

Chles.—Your sweet lips, mademoiselle, are nicer than any weather.

Maria.—Oh, how you talk! I rather wanted to ask you just to write a few verses in my album, just as a keepsake. You know so much poetry.

Chles.—Of course I will, mademoiselle; anything to please you. You have only to say what kind of poetry you like.

Maria.—Oh, the same as—you know, something nice and original.

Chles.—But what are verses, after all? I know any amount of them.

Maria.—But tell me, do, what will you write for me?

Chles.—Well, what is the use of telling you? I know them without that.

Maria.—I do love them so!

Chles.—I know lots of every sort. Here is something for you: "Oh, thou man, who vainly criest against God in thy grief!" and so on. Well, there are others like that—I can't remember them at this moment. However, that doesn't matter a bit. Rather let me declare my love for you, which has been kindled by your lovely eyes. (Moving his chair near her.)

Maria.—Love! I don't understand what you mean by love. I never heard of it! What is it? (Moves her chair away.)

Chles.—Why do you move your chair away? Let us sit close to each other; it is much nicer.

Maria.—(Moving away.) Why should we sit so close? Farther off will do just as well.

Chles.—(Moving nearer to her.) Why should we sit so far off? Closer will do just as well.

Maria.—(Moving away.) Why do you go on like this?

Chles.—(Moving nearer.) It's only your fancy. We're not really sitting close to each other. Just imagine we are sitting a long way apart.

Maria.—(Suddenly, looking toward the window.) There was something seemed to fly by just now. Was it a magpie, do you think, or some other bird?

Chles.—Oh, yes; it was a magpie. (He kisses her on the shoulder, looking all the time at the window.)

Maria.—(Rising angrily.) No, no, that's too much! How can you be so rude?

Chles.—(Seizing her hand.) Forgive me, mademoiselle; it was love for you that made me do it. Love! Love!

Maria.—You take me for a mere country girl. (Tries to escape.)

Chles.—It was love, indeed, it was love! I was only joking, Maria Antonovna. Don't be angry with me. I will go down on my knees, if you like, and beg your pardon. (Falls on his knees.) Forgive me! There, you see I am on my knees. Oh, forgive me!

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Lor'! here's a pretty scene!

Chles.—(Rising.) Oh, the devil!

Anna.—And pray, what does this mean? This is pretty sort of behavior, this!

Maria.—Mamma, dear, I—

Anna.—Go away at once; do you hear? Go away! Leave the room, and don't show yourself again!

(*Maria goes out crying.*)

Anna.—Excuse me; I confess I was rather astonished.

Chles.—(Aside.) She's not half bad-looking, either! (He throws himself on his knees before her.) Madam, you see I am desperately in love.

Anna.—Don't go down on your knees! Oh, stand up; do! The floor is so dirty here!

Chles.—No, I won't get up; I won't get up! On my knees alone I hear my fate, whether I am doomed to die or live.

Anna.—But excuse me; I don't as yet quite understand what you mean. Unless my eyes deceive me, you are making a proposal to my daughter.

Chles.—No, no; it is you that I am in love with. My existence hangs on a single hair. If you don't crown my constant love with happiness, I am unworthy to exist on this mortal earth any longer. My heart is on fire. Give us your hand.

Anna.—But really—I must say—you must remember—to some extent—in a way—I am married already, you see.

Chles.—That doesn't matter a rap! Love makes no distinctions. As the poet says, "The laws may condemn, but"—let us flee and seek the spot where the shadows of the streams—Give us your hand; do, now.

Enter *Maria*.

Maria.—Mamma, papa said that you— (Sees *Chlestakoff* on his knees.) Lor'! here's a pretty scene!

Anna.—What do you mean, you flighty girl, to come darting into the room like a burnt cat? Well, and what did you find to astonish you so? What do you suppose, eh? Really, you go on like a child of three years old. You are not the very least bit like a grown-up girl of eighteen. I really don't know

when you will learn a little sense and begin to behave like a young lady who has been properly brought up, and when you will know what you ought to do and ought not to do, and quiet down a little.

Maria.—(Through her tears.) Really, mamma, I didn't know——

Anna.—You are perfectly wild; you are getting wind in your head. I think you are getting just like Liapkin Tiapkin's daughters. That's not the kind of people you should take as an example; no, indeed! Try to imitate me—your mother! That's the sort of model you should set before you!

Chles.—(After walking up and down the room undecided for a short time, finally resolves, and goes up to the daughter and takes her by the hand.) Anna Andreevna, don't oppose our happiness; confirm with your blessing our constant love.

Anna.—Why, then, it is she that you——

Chles.—Is it to be life or death?

Anna.—There, you see, you stupid girl; do you understand now; it is for a little silly fool like you that our guest has condescended to go down on his knees? You instantly run away like one possessed; you really deserve I should refuse my consent on purpose. You don't deserve such luck!

Maria.—I won't do it again, mamma, really!

Enter the Prefect, perfectly distraught.

Prefect.—I won't do it again, your excellency; don't ruin me altogether.

Chles.—Why, what is the matter with you?

Pre.—Those shopkeepers have been complaining to your excellency. I declare to you on my word of honor that not half they say is true. They all rob and swindle the people themselves. That non-commissioned officer's wife told you a parcel of lies about my having flogged her. It is a lie, I swear it is a lie; she—flogged herself.

Chles.—Oh, bother the non-commissioned officer's wife; I don't care about her.

Pre.—Don't believe them! They are such liars that a child this high couldn't believe them. The whole town knows what

liars they are; and as for swindlers, I venture to say they are the biggest swindlers the world ever saw.

Anna.—Do you know the honor that Ivan Alexandrovitch proposes to do us? He asks our daughter's hand in marriage.

Pre.—Where? Where? You must be stark, staring mad, my dear. Don't be angry, your excellency; she is a little touched in the head. Her mother was like that before her.

Chles.—It is true I have proposed to her. I am in love.

Pre.—I can't believe it, your excellency.

Anna.—You can't believe a thing when you are told it.

Chles.—I am not joking, I assure you. I am ready to go mad with love.

Pre.—I daren't believe it. I am not worthy of such an honor.

Chles.—It is a fact. And if you don't agree to let me have Maria Antonovna, the devil knows, I am ready for anything.

Pre.—I can't believe it, your excellency—you are pleased to jest.

Anna.—Oh, what a dolt you are! As a matter of fact, the whole thing has been explained to you.

Pre.—I can't believe it.

Chles.—Give me your consent. Give us your consent. I am a desperate man, and ready for anything; and when I shoot myself, you will be tried for murder!

Pre.—(Losing his head.) Oh, good heavens! Really, I have done nothing wrong, neither in thought nor deed. Don't be angry with me. Do exactly as you please. I really don't know myself what I am doing. I made such a fool of myself—such a fool as never was!

Anna.—Now, then, give them your blessing.

Pre.—May God bless you! Really I am not guilty! The devil! What is he up to? Why, he is kissing her, absolutely kissing her, as if they really were engaged! By Jove, what a happy idea! Here's a piece of luck.

Enter Ossip.

Ossip.—The horses are ready, sir.

Chles.—All right! I will come directly.

Pre.—Are you pleased to be going away?

Chles.—Yes, I must be off.

Pre.—But when will you—that is to say—you were pleased to hint at something like a marriage.

Chles.—It will be directly. I must just go for one day to my uncle, a rich old man; I shall be back to-morrow.

Pre.—We can't venture to detain you. I trust we shall have a delightful meeting again soon.

Chles.—Of course, of course; I will be back directly. Good-bye, my love! I really cannot express what I feel. Good-bye, my darling! (Kisses Maria's hand.)

Pre.—Don't you want anything for the journey? You were good enough to say, I think, that you were in want of money.

Chles.—Oh, no, thanks; why should you think so? Well, perhaps I may as well take a little.

Pre.—How much do you want, do you think?

Chles.—Well, you lent me two hundred—that is to say, four hundred, not two hundred; I don't wish to take advantage of your mistake—so suppose you make it a round sum and make it eight hundred altogether.

Pre.—I will give it to you in a minute. (Takes it out of his pocketbook.) Here it is, all in new banknotes, as if on purpose.

Chles.—Oh, thanks! This is capital! New money brings new happiness, they say; eh?

Pre.—Exactly so.

Chles.—Good-bye, Anton Antonovitch. Much obliged for your hospitality. I have not had such a good reception anywhere as I have had here. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna; good-bye, Maria, my darling. (Exeunt omnes.)

(Outside the scene, voices.)

Chles.'s Voice.—Good-bye, my angel, Maria Antonovna!

Pre.'s Voice.—Hallo! Going in a post-chaise that you will have to change at every stage?

Chles.'s Voice.—Oh, yes; I am accustomed to it. Springs make my head ache.

Driver's voice.—Whoa there—whoa!

Pre.'s voice.—Then have something to sit on at all events, if only a rug. Shall I tell them to bring you a rug?

Chles.'s voice.—O no, thanks, that's a mere trifle. Well, perhaps I might as well have a rug.

Pre.'s voice.—Hallo, Avdotia, run to the cupboard and fetch the best rug, the Persian one, with blue border. Look sharp!

Driver's voice.—Whoa, I say, whoa!

Pre.'s voice.—When may we venture to expect you then?

Chles.'s voice.—To-morrow or the day after.

Ossip's voice.—Ah, this is the rug, is it? Here, spread it out like that, and now some straw on this side.

Driver's voice.—Whoa!

Ossip's voice.—There, on this side, here, a little more! That'll do, that'll do famously. Now then, sit down, your worship!

Chles.'s voice.—Good-bye, Anton Antonovitch.

Pre.'s voice.—Good-bye, your Excellency.

Ladies.—Good-bye, Ivan Alexandrovitch!

Chles.'s voice.—Good-bye, mamma.

Driver's voice.—Now, then, off you go, my flyers!

ACT V.

Scene the same.

The Prefect, Anna Andreevna and Maria.

Prefect.—Well, Anna Andreevna, have you thought all this over at all? Here's a conquest we have made, eh? By Jove, you never dreamt of this, did you, now? Simple Prefect's wife one day, and the next, ugh! What devil's luck you must have been born with, old woman!

Anna.—Not at all! I knew it a long time ago! You are astounded because you're a common sort of man, and you've never seen people who are *comme il faut*.

Pre.—Oh, all very well, my dear, I am a man *comme il faut* myself. All the same, when you think of it Anna, what fine

birds we'll become, you and I, eh? We'll be real top-sawyers now! The deuce, I should think we would! Well, wait a bit now! Just you see if I don't make those fellows who are so fond of making petitions and complaints jump. I'll give them pepper. Hallo, who's there? Here, Ivan Karpovitch, just call those shopkeepers here, I'll drop on them, the rascals; complain against me, indeed! the cursed Jews! Just you wait a bit, my good fellows; I chastised them with whips before, but now I'll give 'em scorpions. Write them all down, everyone who went howling against me, especially the writer, the fellow who got the petitions up for them. Let every man-jack know the honor that has been bestowed on their Prefect, that his daughter is going to marry none of your ordinary men, begad! but a fellow who has not got his equal in the world, who can do anything, anything, any mortal thing; tell every man about that! Shout it out in the streets, ring the bells; damn it all, when we have a festival we will have a real good one. Ah, Anna Andreevna, ah! what shall we do now? Where shall we live, here or St. Petersburg?

Anna.—Petersburg, of course. How could we possibly stay here?

Pre.—Well, if it must be, it shall be Petersburg. At the same time it would not be half bad here. However, we can send the Prefectship to the devil now, I suppose, eh, Anna Andreevna!

Anna.—Of course! What's a Prefectship now?

Pre.—Bless you, I shall become a real swell official, eh, Anna Andreevna? You know he is on intimate terms with all the Ministers and goes to Court. I shall get all the promotion he will be able to get me. I should not be surprised if I became a general in time, eh, Anna Andreevna? What do you think about it? Do you think they might make me a general?

Anna.—I should think so. It is perfectly possible.

Pre.—Oh, the devil take it! It will be a fine thing to be a general and have a ribbon over your shoulder. What shall it be, Anna, red or blue, the Saint Anne or the White Eagle?

Anna.—Why, the blue is the best, of course.

Pre.—Oh, that's what you want, is it? Well, the red is not bad either. Now, I will tell you why I want so much to

be a general, because if it happens you are travelling anywhere you see aides-de-camp and adjutants scamper in front of you and order fresh horses wherever you go, and then at the posting stations no one else has a chance of getting them. They all wait for you, all these captains and petty officers, Prefects and people of that sort, and you don't take the slightest notice of them. You go and dine with the Governor, and there, "get out of the way," the Prefect has to stand before you, ha, ha, ha. By Jove, that's the part of it all I like.

Anna.—Oh, yes, you like all those coarse kinds of things, but you must remember that your life will be quite different. That your friends won't be some doggy judge or other, whom you go out with after hares, or a man like Zemlianka, not a bit! You will have to know polished, cultivated men, noble men, men of society, but I declare I feel afraid for you, you will let some word or other slip out which is never heard in polite society.

Pre.—What does it matter? A word or two won't hurt.

Anna.—That's all very well, when you were a simple Prefect, but now your life is quite different.

Pre.—Yes, by Jove; do you know, I am told that there are two sorts of fish at Petersburg, the smelt and the whitebait; that they simply make your mouth water when you begin to eat them.

Anna.—He can think of nothing but fish! My views are quite different; I want nothing else than that our house should be the first in St. Petersburg, and that there should be such a smell of perfume in the rooms that you can hardly go into them, and when you do you feel inclined to close your eyes and sniff up the delicious fragrance.

Enter the Shopkeepers.

Pre.—Hallo, my boys, how are you?

Shop.—I trust we see your honor in good health.

Pre.—How are you, my dear fellows, how are you getting on in business, eh? Ugh! You tinkers you, counter-jumpers, you'll come complain against me, will you? You scoundrels, you! You brute beasts, you sharks, complain, will you? What!

I took too much, did I? Now, thinks you, we'll take him and put him in prison. God damn your——

Anna.—Anton Antonovitch! what language you are using!

Pre.—Oh, language indeed! I'm not going to bother about my language now. Do you know that same official you complained to is going to marry my daughter? How do you like that, eh? What do you say now? You swindle the townspeople! I've got you now. If you make a contract with Government you swindle it out of a 100,000 roubles, furnishing rotten cloth, then you go and make me a present of twenty-five yards, and expect a reward for it into the bargain. If you only knew you'd—he puts his stomach out forsooth—he is a merchant! He must not be touched! “We don't give way,” they say, “to the gentry,” you are pretty fellows! Why, a gentleman learns some science if he is whipped at school! It's for his own good, that he may be something useful; but you, you begin as rogues and your master beats you for not knowing how to cheat. As a boy, when you don't know the Lord's Prayer yet, you go in for false measures, and you put on a big stomach and your pockets swell out. Oh, then we put on airs, begad! Wonderful creatures we are; because you turn out sixteen urns a day, you must put on a devil of a lot of side! Damn your side, and damn the lot of you!

Shop.—We confess, Anton Antonovitch!

Pre.—Complain, will you? I should like to know who helped you in that swindle about the bridge, when you charged for twenty thousand rubles' worth of wood, and you didn't supply a hundred rubles' worth. I helped you, you goat-bearded brute you! You forget that, eh? If I chose to split on you I could get you sent to Siberia. Ah, what do you say to that?

Shop.—We were wrong to complain, Anton Antonovitch; the devil tempted us. It is the last time we will ever do it. We will make up to you in any way you like, only don't be vagry with us.

Pre.—Don't be angry with you, yes, you can grovel at my feet now, and why? Because I have got the whip-hand of you! If you had got the least bit the better of me, you would have trodden me down into the very mud and then thrown logs on the top of me too.

Shop.—Don't ruin us, Anton Antonovitch!

Pre.—Don't ruin us, you say now, ah, what was it before, eh? (Shaking his fist at them.) I'd like—well, that's enough, I'll let you off this time. I don't bear malice. Still just you look out, and keep your ears open. It is not just an ordinary gentleman that my daughter is going to marry, and there will be a few congratulatory presents, do you understand, and none of your ordinary little things, backs of sturgeons and loaves of sugar and things like that. Well, be off with you, for God's sake!
(Merchants go out.)

Enter Ammos, Artemie and Ras.

Ammos.—Can the report be true, Anton Antonovitch? What an extraordinary piece of good luck that has come to you!

Art.—I have the honor to offer my congratulations on the extraordinary piece of good fortune that has befallen you! I rejoiced from the bottom of my soul to hear it, Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna. (Kisses their hands.)

Ras.—I congratulate you, Anton Antonovitch. May God give you long life and to your new relative too. May He bless you with a numerous progeny, grandsons and great-grandsons, Anna Andreevna, and Maria Antonovna. (Kisses their hands.)

Enter Karobkin with his wife and Lulukoff.

Karobkin.—I have the honor to congratulate you, Anton Antonovitch, Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna.

Karobkin's Wife.—I heartily congratulate you, Anna Andreevna, on this new happiness.

Lulu.—I have the honor to congratulate you, Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna. Let me congratulate you. (Kisses each of their hands and after each performance turns to the audience and puts his tongue in his cheek.)

Enter a crowd of people dressed in frock-coats.

People.—Anna Andreevna and Maria Antonovna! (Go up to each of the ladies and kiss their hands.)

Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky come in during this performance.

Bobchinsky.—I have the honor to congratulate you.

Dobchinsky.—Anton Antonovitch, I have the honor to congratulate you.

Bob.—This most auspicious event.

Dob.—Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna.

Bob.—Anna Andreevna, Maria Antonovna.

(Both go to kiss her hand together, and their heads come into collision.)

Dob.—Let me congratulate you. How happy you will be. You will wear cloth of gold and have all sorts of delicate things to eat and pass your time in pleasure.

Bob.—Maria Antonovna, let me congratulate you. May heaven send you every kind of wealth, lots of gold, little baby soon, a little chap you can put on the palm of your hand and he will squeak, squeak, squeak!

Luka Lukitch and his wife come in.

Luka.—I have the honor—

Luka's Wife.—(Running in front of him.) I congratulate you, Anna Andreevna; I really was so delighted. I was just told Anna Andreevna's daughter is engaged to be married. Good heavens, I thought, and so delighted I was that I said to my husband, "My dear Luka," I said, "here's a happy thing for Anna Andreevna." Thank heaven for it! I thought to myself, and I said to him, I am so overjoyed that I am dying with impatience to go off and tell Anna Andreevna herself—ah, good Lord, I thought to myself, Anna Andreevna has always wanted to make a good match for her daughter, and now see how fate has made one for her. Just exactly what she wanted! And I was so overcome with delight that I could hardly speak! I literally cried with joy—I actually sobbed, so that my husband said to me, "My dear, what are you sobbing about?" "My dear Luka," I said, "I really don't know." My tears were flowing in streams.

Pre.—Sit down, gentlemen and ladies, I beg of you, sit down. Meeshka, bring some more chairs here.

Enter Orderlies and Police Sergeant.

Sergeant.—I have the honor to congratulate you and to wish you many years' happiness.

Pre.—Thanks, thanks; sit down, gentlemen.

Ammos.—Tell us, Anton Antonovitch, how did it all begin? How did it all happen?

Pre.—The way it took place was most extraordinary. He was good enough to make the proposal himself, personally.

Anna.—He did it with a most perfect refinement and gentlemanly feeling. He put it most charmingly. "Anna Andreevna," he said, "it is simply from the respect that I feel for your high qualities," and a handsome, well-educated young fellow full of the highest principles—"believe me," he said, "my life is not worth a straw. It is simply the veneration I feel for your rare virtues."

Maria.—Oh, mamma! Why, he said that to me!

Anna.—Be quiet! You don't know anything! Don't go interfering with what doesn't concern you. "Anna Andreevna," he said, "I am really astounded;" he uttered a flow of flattering words like these, and I was just going to say, "Really, we can't venture to hope for such an honor," when he suddenly fell on his knees and in such a fascinating way he said, "Anna Andreevna, don't make me the most miserable of men; assent to my wishes or I lay myself a corpse at your feet."

Maria.—Really, mamma, but he said all that about me!

Anna.—Well, yes, of course! There was something about you, too. I never said there was not.

Pre.—I was quite alarmed. He said he would shoot himself. "I will shoot myself," he cried out, "I really will."

All the Ladies Present.—(Together.) Lor! Fancy that!

Ammos.—What a go!

Luka.—To tell the plain truth, the hand of fate was in it!

Art.—It is not fate, my dear fellow; that's all humbug! It is the Prefect's eminent services that have brought it about. (Aside.) A swine like that always gets such a piece of luck!

Ammos.—If you like, Anton Antonovitch, I will sell you the dog we were bargaining for this morning.

Pre.—No, I have no time to care about dogs just now.

Ammos.—Well, if you don't want that one, perhaps we can agree about another.

Karo's Wife.—Ah, Anna Andreevna, you can't imagine how delighted I am at your happiness!

Karo.—Allow me to ask where is your noble guest now? I heard that he had gone away, for some reason or other.

Pre.—Yes, he has just gone away on some very important business.

Anna.—He has gone to see his uncle, to ask his blessing.

Pre.—Yes, to ask his blessing. To-morrow—— (He sneezes and they congratulate him in chorus.) Many thanks! He will be back to-morrow. (Sneezes again; murmurs of congratulation again.)

Serg.—Bless you, your excellency.

Bob.—My wish for you is a hundred years of life and a mountain of gold pieces.

Dob.—I wish you forty times forty years of life.

Art.—(Aside.) May you come to utter grief!

Karo's Wife.—(Aside.) May the devil take you!

Pre.—(Not hearing what they say.) Many thanks, I am sure. I wish you the same.

Anna.—We mean, now, to live in St. Petersburg. The atmosphere here is a little too provincial. You know this is not at all the sort of thing we like. My husband, too, he will get his promotion to the rank of general in St. Petersburg.

Pre.—I must say, gentlemen, that—the deuce take it, I have set my heart on being a general.

Luka.—I hope to heaven you will get it.

Ras.—With man it is impossible, with God all things are possible.

Ammos.—Big ships make long voyages.

Art.—Honors keep pace with merit!

Ammos.—(Aside.) A nice thing, indeed, if he really does become a general, it'll suit him about as well as a saddle suits a cow. No, my lad, it is a long way to that yet. There are others with cleaner hands than yours who are not generals yet.

Art.—(Aside.) He is thinking, the devil take it, of being a general already. What of this? It would not be so very

surprising; perhaps he may become a general. He swaggers enough. The devil himself could not beat him at that. (Aloud.) Don't forget us, then, Anton Antonovitch!

Ammos.—And if anything unpleasant should happen, for instance, in the course of business, I hope we may count on your protection.

Karo.—Next year I shall be bringing my son to St. Petersburg to try to get him in the service for the benefit of the state. I trust you will do us the kindness to extend your protection to me and be like a father to the orphan boy.

Pre.—I am quite ready to do what I can—quite ready, I am sure.

Anna.—Oh, you are always ready to promise anything. In the first place, you won't have time to think about this, and why should you go burdening yourself with promises of that sort?

Pre.—Why not, my love? One can, now and then.

Anna.—Well, perhaps you can; but still you need not go protecting all the small fry like this.

Karo's Wife.—(Aside.) Do you hear what she calls us?

A Guest.—Oh, she has always been like that. I know her. Set her down to the table, and out she stretches her feet.

Enter the Postmaster.

Postmaster.—Gentlemen, a most extraordinary thing has happened. That official whom we all took for the Government Inspector was not an inspector at all!

All.—How? How do you mean? Not an inspector at all?

Post.—Not a bit of it! I found this out from a letter!

Pre.—What! What do you mean? What letter?

Post.—From a letter he wrote with his very own hand. They brought me a letter to the post, I looked at the address; I saw Post Office street; I was nearly dumbfounded. Hallo, thinks I, he has found out some irregularities in the Postal Department and has reported me to Government. I took the letter and broke open the seal.

Pre.—How dare you!

Post.—I really don't know how I made up my mind to do it; some supernatural impulse drove me on. I was just going to send it off by a special courier, but I felt such a tremendous curiosity to see what was inside; I never felt anything like it before in my life. I can't—I can't—I hear a ringing in my ears, then it draws me on, see how it draws me on. On one side I seem to hear a voice warning me, "Don't break the seal, you will come to awful grief;" on the other side, just like some demon kept whispering to me, "Break it, break it and see." When I pressed the seal I felt hot all over, and when I broke it open, by Jove, a cold chill ran down my back. My hand shook and I felt all abroad.

Pre.—How dare you open the letter of a powerful personage like that?

Post.—But that's the point! He is not powerful, and he's not a personage, neither!

Pre.—And what is he, pray, in your opinion?

Post.—He is neither one nor the other. The devil only knows what he is.

Pre.—(Angrily.) What do you mean, neither one nor the other? How dare you talk to me like that: neither one nor the other, and the devil only knows what he is? I will put you under arrest.

Post.—Who? You?

Pre.—Yes, I.

Post.—Oh, just you try it on.

Pre.—Do you know that he is going to marry my daughter? I shall be a great man myself, and I could pack you off to Siberia, if I like.

Post.—Oh, Anton Antonovitch, Siberia, indeed! It's a far cry to Siberia. I had better read you the letter, gentlemen, if you will allow me. Shall I read it?

All.—Yes, read it, read it!

Post.—(Reads.) "I hasten to tell you, my dear Tryapitchkin, about a most extraordinary adventure I have had. On the way I was completely cleaned out all round by a captain of a line regiment, so completely that the inn-keeper actually wanted to lodge me in jail, when all at once, thanks

to my Petersburg phiz and dress, the people of the town proceeded to take me for a governor-general at least, so here I am lodging in the Prefect's house, having a jolly time and making hot love to his wife and daughter, both of them. Do you remember once when we were awfully hard up and had to get our dinners by some dodge or another, and how the restaurant-keeper seized me by the collar because I wanted to pay for some pies I had by a check on the Bank of England? I tell you, it is rather different here now. Everybody lends me as much money as I choose to ask for. They are most eccentric fellows. You would die with laughing. I know you write articles. You really must bring them in. *Dramatis Personæ*: to begin with, the Prefect, born fool, stupid as an owl"—

Pre.—It is impossible; that is not there!

Post.—Well, read it yourself, then.

Pre.—(Reads.) "Born fool, stupid as an owl." It is impossible! You put this in yourself!

Post.—How on earth should I put it in?

Art.—Read it out!

Luka.—Go on!

Post.—(Reads.) "The Prefect, a born fool, stupid as an owl."

Pre.—Oh, the devil! As if you need repeat that over again! As if that was such a precious good thing!

Post.—Hem, hem, hem! "Stupid as an owl! The post-master is also a good fellow"— (Stops.) He has written something not very nice about me.

Pre.—Go on; read it!

Post.—What's the good?

Pre.—Oh, the devil take it! If it's read at all, read it properly, read every word!

Art.—Here, give it me. I'll read it! (Reads.) "The post-master is for all the world like the porter in our department, Metcheef, and probably drinks bitters to the same extent, the scamp!"

Post.—Wretched young rascal! He ought to be flogged, that is all!

Art.—(Reads.) “The superintendent of the hospital”——
(Stops.)

Karo.—Why don’t you go on?

Art.—The writing’s rather hard to read, but evidently he’s a good-for-nothing fellow.

Karo.—Here, give it to me. I’ve got better eyes than you have.

Art.—No, no, we will leave that passage out. It is plainer further on.

Karo.—No, give it to me. I know all about it.

Art.—Well, if it is to be read, I will read it myself, but a little further on it is all right—quite clearly written!

Post.—No, no, read the whole thing! We have read all that went before.

All.—Give the letter up, Artemie, to Karopkin. Now, then, go on!

Art.—Directly, directly—look here, here’s the place—begin here (pointing with his finger).

Post.—No, no, that’s all rot—go right through it.

Karo.—(Reads.) “The superintendent of the hospitals, Zemlianka, is a regular pig in a skull-cap.”

Art.—It isn’t even witty. Pig in a skull-cap! Whoever saw a pig in a skull-cap!

Karo.—(Reads.) “The school director stinks like anything of onions.”

Luka.—I like that! I never put an onion into my mouth in my life.

Ammos.—(Aside.) Thank heaven, there is nothing about me in it.

Karo.—(Reads.) “The judge”——

Ammos.—(Aside.) By Jove, there it is. (Aloud.) Gentlemen, I think the letter is rather long and tedious, what’s the good of reading all this trash?

Post.—No, no, read it all!

Art.—Go on!

Karo.—(Reads.) "The judge, Liapkin Tiapkin, is a man thoroughly mauvais ton," that must be a French word, I should say.

Ammos.—Heaven only knows what it means. It is well if it only means scoundrel, but it may be something worse still.

Karo.—(Reads.) "However, on the whole they are good-natured, hospitable people. Good-bye, my dear Tryapitchkin. I think I will follow your example and take to literature; it's a stupid thing to live as I do. I want some food for the mind; I see one ought to go in for something higher. Write to me to the Saratoff District, to the village Padkeletovka." Here is the address, "Ivan Vassilievitch, Tryapitchkin, St. Petersburg, Post Office street, No. 97, round the corner in the yard, third-story to the right."

Guests.—Well, this is a slap in the face we hardly expected.

Pre.—Well, I am completely done with a vengeance. Killed! killed! I can't see anything! (Waving his hands.) I see what look like snouts, pigs' snouts, instead of faces, and nothing more. Bring me back that fellow, bring him back!

Post.—Bring him back! Easier said than done. I ordered the overseer to give him the best post-chase he had and three horses, and some demon inspired me give him a letter forwarding him along the whole road.

Karo's Wife.—Here's a pretty thing, certainly!

Ammos.—Confound it! He got three hundred rubles out of me.

Luka.—Three hundred out of me, too!

Bob.—And out of Peter Ivanovitch and me, sixty-five rubles paper money. Yes, indeed!

Ammos.—How did it all happen, gentlemen; how on earth was it we got fooled like this?

Pre.—How? How? Why, I was simply an old idiot, that's what I was. I have outlived my wits, stupid old sheep that I am! Here I have been thirty years in the Government service, not a single shopkeeper, not a contractor has ever got the better of me. I have cheated swindler after swindler. I have played rogues and cheaters who could rob the whole world. I have humbugged three governors! What am I

talking about? Humbug a governor, indeed! Any fool can humbug a governor.

Anna.—But there must be some mistake! He is engaged to our Maria.

Pre.—Engaged, indeed! He has made a fool of you, that is what his being engaged comes to. Here, look at me, let everybody have a good look at me, let the whole world, let the whole of Christendom stare at me and see how the Prefect's been fooled! (Threatening himself with his fist.) You idiot! you idiot! you old blackguard! To take up a pipe-stem of a fellow, a mere rag of a chap like that, as a man of importance. See where he gallops along the road to the jingle of the bells. He will carry the story through the whole world. It is not merely that we should be made laughing-stocks, but some confounded paper-spoiling, quill-driving blackguard will be found to put us in a comedy, that's the worst of it! He won't spare rank or calling, and everyone will grin from ear to ear and clap his hands. Who are you laughing at? At yourselves, at yourselves! Oh, you—— (Stamping in his rage.) I'd have all these paper-spoilers and your quill-drivers and your cursed Liberals—the devil's spawn, I'd have them all tied up in a bunch, rubbed in flour and dropped into hell. I can't collect my thoughts. Ah, it is true, when God wishes to punish anyone, he first takes away his wits from him. What was there in this whipper-snapper a bit like a Government Inspector? He was not like one in the least! There was not the slightest resemblance. All at once everyone was in full cry, inspector, inspector! Who first gave out he was an inspector? Tell me, somebody.

Art.—If you were to kill me, I could not explain in the least how it happened. It seems to me that we were in a regular fog; the devil himself deceived us.

Ammos.—Oh, as for who first gave it out, why, of course, it was those two fine fellows, Dobchinsky and Bobchinsky.

Bob.—I really, I—I never thought——

Dob.—As for me—I assure you nothing was——

Art.—Of course, it was you!

Luka.—Of course, it was! You came running like men possessed from the inn. "He is come," you said, "and he doesn't pay for anything." Precious mare's nest you found!

Pre.—Yes, it was you, I swear, you damned liars, you scandalmongers!

Art.—Go to the devil with your stories and your inspectors!

Pre.—All you do is to gad about the town and worry everybody, you cursed chatterers. You tell stories about your neighbors and backbite everybody. You chattering magpies you——

Ammos.—Bungling idiots!

Luka.—Dunderheaded fools!

Art.—Short-bellied toadstools!

Bob.—I swear it was not I—it was Peter Ivanovitch!

Dob.—No, Peter Ivanovitch, it was you that first said——

Bob.—It was not—you were the first.

Enter Gendarme.

Gendarme.—An official has come from St. Petersburg on special duty, who requires your immediate attendance. He is staying at the inn.

(All present are thunderstruck by these words, and a cry of amazement bursts from all the ladies. The whole group remains as if it were turned to stone.)

To anyone acquainted with Nicolai Gogol's dramatic style it will pass without saying that *The Inspector* ranks as one of his completest stage productions, and, perhaps, as the one which best of all reflects its author's genius and the spirit of the times and surroundings amid which it was written. After making necessary allowance for the difficulty of maintaining in a translation all the little colorings and by-plays of an original, it is still evident, on even a casual perusal of the play, that the author intended to make it his chef-d'œuvre. This is inferable from every phase of its merits, and, indeed, was as

good as proclaimed when the author insisted on a personal supervision of its first appearance on the stage.

A leading merit of its ensemble is its fidelity to existing social and official conditions. Though a lengthy play, the author has never found himself in need of spirited situations. Its action is ever sprightly and well sustained. The characters are true to themselves, homely yet keenly observant, witty in their way, and at proper times guilty of that quaint satire whose introduction as a corrective of evils in state and society was a prime object of the author. The plot is tame, but this is overlooked in the variety and sprightliness of the action and in the success of the dénouement.

IN THE DEPTHS

(NA DNIE)

BY

MAXIM GORKI

(ALEXEI MAXIMOVITCH PIESHKOV)

Translated, chiefly from the Dumoulin edition, by

W. H. H. CHAMBERS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MIKHAIL IVANOVITCH KOSTYLEV, 54 years old; proprietor of a lodging-house.

VASILISA KARPOVNA, 26 years old; his wife.

NATASHA, 20 years old; her sister.

ABRAM MEDVEDEV, 50 years old; their uncle, policeman.

VASKA PEPEL, 28 years old.

ANDREI MITRICH KLESCH, 40 years old; locksmith.

ANNA, 30 years old; his wife.

NASTYA, 24 years old.

KVASNYA, about 40 years of age; pastry peddler.

BUBNOV, 45 years old, cap-maker.

SATIN, about 40 years of age.

THE ACTOR, about the same age.

THE BARON, 33 years of age.

LUKA, 60 years of age; tramp.

ALUSHKA, 20 years of age; shoemaker.

ZHOB KRIVVOY, a laborer.

THE TARTAR, a laborer.

A number of unnamed vagabonds, male and female

In the Depths.

ARGUMENT.

In a low night-lodging house the very dregs of Russian life are assembled. The proprietor's wife, Vasilisa, has a liaison with Vaska Pepel, who, from early childhood up, having been always called by society "son of a thief" and "thief," has long since become one. He has grown tired of his mistress and now loves her sister, Natasha. Vasilisa learns this and promises to give him her sister in marriage if he will murder her (Vasilisa's) husband. Vaska refuses and shortly afterward proposes to Natasha. The mistress, unseen, overhears this proposal, and when Natasha goes into the proprietor's room a samovar filled with scalding water is upset over her. In the fight which follows Vaska strikes the husband, who dies. Vasilisa triumphantly announces that Vaska is her lover; that he has intentionally killed her husband, and sends for the police. Vaska in a passion exclaims that Vasilisa, herself, had asked him to kill her husband; whereupon Natasha accuses them of being accomplices, and declares the proposal merely a scheme to bring about the murder. Vasilisa and Vaska are cast into prison and Natasha disappears.

But into this "graveyard filled with bodies of prematurely buried people" there enters one serene spirit, the "over-tramp" Luka—many of whose apothegms have already become proverbial in Russia. His words and acts and their effect upon his fellow-lodgers caused a brilliant Russian critic to say: "This drama is a song; it is a hymn to humanity. It is awful and joyful. Seeing in the depths decaying, abandoned people you say to your conscience: 'They are already dead; they no longer feel.' And you are reconciled, at peace, whatever may happen to them. But suddenly you retreat in horror. They are still alive! A marvellous spectacle of indescribable beauty presents itself to your eyes. Beneath the muck, beneath filth, ugliness, vice, loathsomeness, horror, in a night-lodging house, among the dregs—the human personality still lives!"

ACT I.

A cavern-like cellar. The ceiling, arched in stone, is black with smoke and filth. Light enters from the front and also through a square window placed high on the right. The right-hand corner, separated from the rest of the room by a slight partition, forms Pepel's bed-room. Near the door in the partition is Bubnov's bunk—simply a sleeping-shelf. The left-hand corner is occupied by a huge Russian stove. In the left wall is a door leading into the kitchen, where Kvasnya, the Baron and Nastya live. Between the door and the stove is a large bed, hidden by a dirty calico curtain. All around the walls, in tiers, are bunks which, like Bubnov's, are simply wooden shelves.

In the foreground is a block on which there is an anvil and a vice; nearby a lower block. Klesch is seated in front of the anvil fitting keys to old locks; at his feet are two large

bunches of used keys, a badly battered samovar, a hammer and some files. In the center is a large table, two benches and a stool—all unpainted and dirty. At the table and near the samovar Kvasnya sits. The Baron is eating black bread and Nastya, with her elbows on the table, is reading a well-thumbed book. On the bed behind the curtain Anna coughs. Bubnov, seated on his bunk, is laying an old pair of ripped-up pantaloons over a cap-form, figuring out how many caps he can make of it. Near him is an old hat box containing visors, pieces of old oilcloth, etc. Satin, who has just awakened, is stretched out in his bunk groaning. On the stove the actor, invisible, coughs.

The beginning of Spring—morning.

Baron.—And then?

Kvasnya.—Oh, no, my dear, no thens for me. I tell you I've already tried it, and I wouldn't get married, no, not for a hundred well-baked crabs.

Bubnov.—(To Satin.) What are you growling about?

(Satin continues to groan.)

Kvasnya.—Do you think that I, a free woman, master of myself, would allow my name to be inscribed on the passport of any man? Never: not if he's an American prince!

Klesch.—You lie.

Kvasnya.—What?

Klesch.—You lie. You'd marry Abramka.

Baron.—(Snatches the book from Nastya and reads the title.) "The Fatal Love." (Bursts into a loud laugh.)

Nastya.—(Holding out her hand.) Give it to me. Hand it back. Come, now, no fooling!

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the head with the book.) You're the fool!

Kvasnya.—(To Klesch.) You red billy-goat! Tell me I lie! How dare you use such insolent words to me?

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the head with the book.) What a fool you are!

Nastya.—(Grabbing the book.) Give it to me.

Klesch.—My, what a grand lady! You'd marry Abramka just the same—that's all you're waiting for.

Kvasnya.—Sure! Why not? You'd better, however, be looking after your own wife whom you've already more than half killed.

Klesch.—Shut up, you old bitch! It's none of your business.

Kvasnya.—Ah! you don't like to hear the truth.

Baron.—It's beginning! Nastya where are you?

Nastya.—(Without raising her eyes.) Oh, let me alone!

Anna.—(Putting her head through the bed curtains.) It's beginning! For heaven's sake don't hollow so—don't quarrel!

Klesch.—Starting in on the same old story, eh?

Anna.—Every blessed day! Let me, at least, die in peace.

Bubnov.—Noise won't keep anyone from dying.

Kvasnya.—(Walking over to Anna's bed.) How have you ever been able to live with such a brute?

Anna.—I implore you, don't!

Kvasnya.—You poor patient creature! Does your breast feel easier?

Baron.—Kvasnya, it's time to go to market.

Kvasnya.—All right, let's go. (To Anna.) Wouldn't you like some nice hot food?

Anna.—No, thanks. What use is it to eat?

Kvasnya.—Eat just the same; heat relieves. I'll leave some in a bowl and you can eat it when you like. Come, Baron. (To Klesch.) Huh! you evil spirit!

(Goes out through the kitchen door.)

Anna.—(Coughing.) O, Lord!

Baron.—(Striking Nastya on the nape of the neck.) Quit it, silly!

Nastya.—Get out! I'm not disturbing you.

Baron.—(Whistling, follows Kvasnya into the kitchen.)

Satin.—(Rising in his bunk.) Who trounced me yesterday?

Bubnov.—What difference does that make, who?

Satin.—No difference I suppose. But why was I trounced?

Bubnov.—Well, you played cards, didn't you?

Satin.—Yes, I played cards.

Bubnov.—There you have it.

Satin.—The scoundrels!

The Actor.—(Showing his head above the stove.) Some day they'll do you up completely.

Satin.—You're an ass!

The Actor.—Why so?

Satin.—Because they never do a man up twice.

The Actor.—(After a pause.) I don't understand—why can't they?

Klesch.—Come now, get down from that stove and tidy up things a bit—no loafing!

The Actor.—Whether I loaf or not it's none of your business, is it?

Klesch.—Vasilisa is coming soon and she'll show you whose business it is.

The Actor.—Devil take Vasilisa! It's the Baron's turn to-day to clean up. Hey, Baron!

Baron.—(Entering from the kitchen.) I haven't time to clean up. I'm going to market with Kvasnya.

The Actor.—That's nothing to me. You can go to the devil, if you like, but it's your turn to sweep just the same, and I'm not going to do others' work.

Baron.—Go to the devil yourself! Nastya will sweep. Say there, "Fatal Love," come to your senses.

(Snatches the book from Nastya.)

Nastya.—(Rising.) What do you want? Give it to me, you blackguard. And it calls itself a Baron!

Baron.—(Handing her the book.) Nastya sweep for me, won't you?

Nastya.—(Going into the kitchen.) What do you take me for?

Kvasnya.—(Standing in the kitchen door, to the Baron.) Are you coming? They can clean-up without you. Hey, Actor, you've been asked, do it. You won't break in two.

The Actor.—That's the way!—always me! I don't understand—

Baron.—(Brings from the kitchen a pair of baskets suspended from a wooden bar. The pannier contains earthenware pots covered with old muslin.) It's rather heavy to-day.

Satin.—Well, why be born a Baron—?

Kvasnya.—(To the Actor.) You'll sweep then, eh? (She follows the Baron out through the rear door.)

The Actor.—(Descending from the stove.) Dust is very injurious to me. (Proudly.) My organism is poisoned by alcohol.
(Sits down on his bunk.)

Satin.—Organism—organon—on—

Anna.—Andrei Mitrich.

Klesch.—What now?

Anna.—Kvasnya left me something there to eat—you eat it.

Klesch.—(Going towards her.) Don't you want to eat anything?

Anna.—No—what's the use of my eating? You work, and you need it.

Klesch.—Then you're afraid that— Don't be afraid—perhaps, still—

Anna.—Go and eat. I feel so bad; the end is probably near.

Klesch.—(Leaving.) Who knows? perhaps you'll come around all right yet. That sometimes happens, you know.
(Goes into the kitchen.)

The Actor.—(Aloud as if awakening from a dream.) At the hospital yesterday the doctor told me: "Your organism is entirely poisoned by alcohol."

Satin.—(Smiling.) Organon.

The Actor.—(Insisting.) Not organon, but or-gan-ism.

Satin.—Sicambre!

The Actor.—No nonsense! I'm talking seriously—I am. If the organism is poisoned by alcohol, then it follows, of course, that it's injurious to sweep—to breathe dust.

Satin.—Ah! microbiotic!

The Actor.—What's that you're muttering?

Satin.—Just words—there's transcendental too!

Bubnov.—What do they mean?

Satin.—I don't know—I've forgotten.

Bubnov.—Then why repeat them?

Satin.—Oh I've heard quite enough of the ordinary words of men. I've heard each of them a thousand times at least.

The Actor.—"Words, words, words," they say in Hamlet. Fine piece that. I've played the grave digger—

Klesch.—(Coming out of the kitchen.) Now you'd better play the broom.

The Actor.—It's none of your business! (Strikes his breast.) "The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered." (I rom behind the scenes comes the noise of a struggle, cries and a policeman's whistle. Klesch immediately begins filing.)

Satin.—I'm very fond of rare, incomprehensible words. When I was a youngster I worked in a telegraph office. I've read lots of books.

Bubnov.—So you worked in a telegraph office too, did you?

Satin.—Yes. There are lots of good books and curious words—I was well-read, I tell you.

Bubnov.—Well, I've heard you tell it at least a hundred times! You "was!" What does that amount to? I "was," also. I was a furrier; had my own shop; had my hands all yellow from dyeing furs—yes yellow all the way up to my elbows—thought they would remain so 'til I died, and now you see they're simply—dirty—yes, simply dirty.

Satin.—Well?

Bubnov.—That's all.

Satin.—Then what were you driving at?

Bubnov.—Nothing much—simply a reflection—which goes to prove that you can stain yourself as much as you please, but that time will wash everything out—yes, everything.

The Actor.—Education don't amount to anything; the thing that counts is talent. I once knew an actor that could scarcely read his part, yet the theatre was shaken with applause when he performed.

Satin.—Bubnov, give me five kopecks.

Bubnov.—I've got only two.

The Actor.—I say that talent is the one thing needful. And talent is merely having faith in one's self—in one's own power——

Satin.—Give me five kopecks, and I'll believe that you're a genius or a hero, a crocodile or a policeman. Klesch, you give me five kopecks.

Klesch.—Go to the devil! There are plenty of beggars of your stripe.

Satin.—Why growl so when we know you haven't a kopeck? We know you haven't.

Anna.—Andrei, I'm suffocating!

Klesch.—Well, what can I do?

Bubnov.—Open the entry door.

Klesch.—Hump, you're smart! Sitting up there nice and warm while I'm here on the ground; let me have your place and then you can open the door as much as you like. I'm cold enough.

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) I don't want the door open; it's your wife that wants it.

Klesch.—Oh, there're plenty of people with lots of wants!

Satin.—My, how that hurts my head! Oh, why do they pound us on the head?

Bubnov.—They not only pound your head, but all other parts of your body. (Rises.) I must buy some thread. I wonder where all my customers are to-day? (He leaves.)

Anna.—(Coughs. Satin remains immobile holding his head.)

The Actor.—(Looks around sadly and walks towards Anna.) Well, feeling badly, are you?

Anna.—I'm suffocating.

The Actor.—I'll help you out into the entry if you like? Come, get up. (He helps her up, throws some rags around her shoulders, and then leads her towards the entry. Steady now! I'm also sick, myself—poisoned by alcohol——

Kostylev.—(Appearing at the door.) Taking a stroll? A pretty couple!

The Actor.—Well, you might at least get out of the way! Don't you see that it's two invalids coming!

Kostylev.—Pass by, then. (While humming a hymn he looks suspiciously around and inclines his head towards the left as if listening particularly for sounds in Pepel's bed room. Meanwhile Klesch loudly rattles his keys and files vigorously, constantly watching the landlord out of the corner of his eye.) Always filing?

Klesch.—What?

Kostylev.—Working, I asked? (A pause.) Oh, yes, I came to ask you something. (Rapidly, in a low voice.) Has my wife been here?

Klesch.—I haven't seen her.

Kostylev.—(Moving cautiously towards Pepel's door.) What a lot of room you take up for two rubles a month! Your bed, and then all this stuff. Yes, five rubles wouldn't be a bit too much. I'll have to charge you half a ruble more.

Klesch.—Better charge me with a noose and hang me! You're about ready to die, yet you're always thinking of half rubles!

Kostylev.—Why hang you? What good would that do? God keep you! Live and enjoy yourself; while I, with the half ruble more that you will give me, shall buy oil for my shrine-lamp and hang it before the holy images as a sacrifice for my sins—and yours. Why do you never think of your sins? Ah! you're a wicked man, Andrei! Your wife is dying on account of your wickedness. No one loves or respects you. Your work is noisy and troublesome to everybody.

Klesch.—(Loudly.) Did you come here to insult me? (Satin groans.)

Kostylev.—(Trembling.) Oh! little father—

The Actor.—(Entering.) I've made a place for the woman in the entry, and covered her all up.

Kostylev.—You're a good fellow! You'll be repaid.

The Actor.—When?

Kostylev.—In the next world, my brother. All our acts are recorded.

The Actor.—You might do better and repay my kindness here.

Kostylev.—In what way?

The Actor.—By forgiving half my debt.

Kostylev.—You're always joking, my good fellow! As if kindness of heart could be repaid in money! Kindness is the most precious of treasures. As to the sum due me, that is, of course, still due; therefore, you must pay me; but there's no must about the repayment of your kindness.

The Actor.—You're a scoundrel, old man! (He goes into the kitchen.)

(Klesch gets up and goes into the entry.)

Kostylev.—(To Satin.) Did you notice? The filer has flown. Ha! ha! ha! He's not fond of me.

Satin.—Who is—except the devil?

Kostylev.—(Smiling.) What insolence! Nevertheless, I'm really fond of you all, my unfortunate, good-for-nothing, ruined brothers. (Quickly.) Is Vaska there?

Satin.—Go look!

Kostylev.—(Knocking on Pepel's door.) Vaska!

(The Actor appears in the kitchen door chewing something.)

Pepel.—(Behind the partition.) Who's there?

Kostylev.—I—I, Vaska.

Pepel.—What do you want?

Kostylev.—(Moving aside.) Open the door.

Satin.—(Without looking at Kostylev.) Oh, he'll open—and she's there!

The Actor.—(Aside, laughs.)

Kostylev.—(Disturbed, in a low tone.) Why, who's there? What did you say?

Satin.—What's that? Talking to me?

Kostylev.—What did you say?

Satin.—Oh, nothing; just talking to myself.

Kostylev.—Look out! Don't joke too much. (Knocks harder.) Vaska!

Pepel.—(Opening the door.) Well, what are you bothering me for?

Kostylev.—(Glancing in the bedroom.) I—you see—I——

Pepel.—Did you bring the money?

Kostylev.—I want to talk to you.

Pepel.—But the money?

Kostylev.—What money? Wait a moment.

Pepel.—The seven rubles for the watch—well?

Kostylev.—What watch do you mean, Vaska?

Vaska.—Look out! Yesterday, in the presence of witnesses, I sold you a watch for ten rubles. I received three. Give me the seven you still owe. What are you squinting about? Instead of attending to business you come here to bother me.

Kostylev.—Don't get mad, Vaska. You see the watch——

Satin.—Was stolen.

Kostylev.—(Severely.) I don't buy stolen things. How can you——

Pepel.—(Shaking Kostylev by the shoulder.) What did you come here to annoy me for? What do you want anyway?

Kostylev.—Oh, nothing. I'll go, since you act this way.

Pepel.—Go; and bring me the money.

Kostylev.—(As he is leaving.) What brutes! Akh! Akh!

The Actor.—'Tis a true comedy.

Satin.—Good! That's what I like.

Pepel.—What brought him here?

Satin.—Why, don't you know? He came here to hunt up his wife. And why didn't you do him up, once for all, Vaska?

Pepel.—Is it worth while spoiling all my life for that wretch?

Satin.—Do it intelligently. Then you can marry Vasilisa and become our landlord.

Pepel.—What a pleasure! Then you'd drink up not only all I have, but you'd peach and so drink me up besides. (Sitting down on a bunk.) Old devil! He woke me up, and I was having such a fine dream, too! I dreamt I had caught an enormous fish, and I was just about to spear it when—

Satin.—That wasn't a fish, that was Vasilisa.

The Actor.—Oh, he caught Vasilisa long ago.

Pepel.—(Angrily.) Go to the devil! and she with you.

Klesch.—(Entering.) It's cold enough to freeze a dog.

The Actor.—Why didn't you bring Anna in? she'll freeze.

Klesch.—Natasha carried her into the kitchen.

The Actor.—The old man will drive her out.

Klesch.—(Beginning to work.) Well, then, Natasha can bring her here.

Satin.—Vaska, give me five kopecks.

The Actor.—What! five kopecks? Say, Vaska, give us twenty.

Pepel.—I'd better give them to you quickly, else you'll be wanting a ruble. Here!

Satin.—Gibraltar-r-r! No better fellows than thieves!

Klesch.—(Dolefully.) They make easy money. They don't work.

Satin.—Easy money comes to many, but few part with it easily. Work? Contrive to make work agreeable to me, and then, perhaps, I'll work, too. Yes, perhaps. When work is a pleasure, life is pleasant. When work is obligatory, life is slavery. (To the Actor.) Come, Sardanapalus, let's go.

The Actor.—Yes, let's go, Nebuchadnezzar; I want to get as full as forty thousand drunkards. (He and Satin leave.)

Pepel.—(Yawning.) How is your wife getting?

Klesch.—Pretty nearly played out. (A pause.)

Pepel.—I look at you filing, and I think what useless toil and trouble.

Klesch.—What should I do?

Pepel.—Nothing.

Klesch.—Then how could I eat?

Pepel.—As many do—

Klesch.—What! like those fellows? Are they men? Do they work? I'm a worker. I feel ashamed of them every time I see them. I've worked since childhood. Do you think I won't get out of here? I shall. It may cost me my skin, but I'll get out. I'm waiting only for my wife to die. I've been here six months. It seems six years.

Pepel.—That's not the right way to talk. You're no better than the others.

Klesch.—No better? They live without conscience, without honor—

Pepel.—(Indifferently.) What good would honor and conscience do them—wouldn't shoe them, surely! Conscience and honor are all right for those who have power and force.

Bubnov.—(Entering.) Oh, I'm frozen!

Pepel.—Bubnov, have you any conscience?

Bubnov.—What, conscience?

Pepel.—Why, yes.

Bubnov.—What for? I'm not rich!

Pepel.—That's what I said, myself. Honor and conscience are for the wealthy. And here's Klesch who abuses us for having no conscience!

Bubnov.—Why, does he want to borrow some?

Pepel.—Oh, he has plenty of his own.

Bubnov.—Then, perhaps, he'd like to sell some? But that's an unsalable article here. Now, if it was old cardboard for caps, I'd buy some myself—on credit, of course.

Pepel.—(Sententiously.) You're an ass, Andrei! You'd better listen to Satin's or the Baron's views on conscience.

Klesch.—I don't want to talk to them.

Pepel.—They've got more brains than you, even if they are drunkards.

Bubnov.—He that is both drunk and wise is doubly wise.

Pepel.—Satin says: "Everyone wishes his neighbor to have a conscience, but there's no advantage in possessing one;" and that's true.

Enter Natasha followed by Luka, who has a staff in his hand, a wallet on his back and a leather purse and tin tea-pot suspended from his belt.

Luka.—Good-day, my good people!

Pepel.—(Stroking his mustache.) Ah, Natasha!

Bubnov.—(To Luka.) Good people! They were but——

Natasha.—I'm bringing you a new lodger.

Luka.—(To Bubnov.) It's all the same to me. I respect even thieves. To me not a flea is bad: they're all black, and they all jump So be it! And where am I to bunk, my dear?

Natasha.—(Pointing to the kitchen door.) Go through there, grandfather.

Luka.—Thanks, my daughter; where warmth is, that is the place for an old man.

Pepel.—What an interesting old fellow you've brought us, Natasha!

Natasha.—Certainly more interesting than you. Andrei, your wife is in the kitchen—come get her soon.

Klesch.—All right!

Natasha.—You ought to be a little more kind to her, now that——

Klesch.—I know——

Natasha.—You know! but it is not enough to know; you must comprehend. It's fearful to die.

Pepel.—Well, I'm not afraid to die.

Natasha.—My, how courageous!

Bubnov.—(Whistling.) This thread's good for nothing.

Pepel.—It's true, I'm not afraid—I'm willing to die at once. Just take a knife and plunge it into my heart. I'd die without saying "ouch!" Yes, die joyfully, since the blow would be struck by a pure hand.

Natasha.—(Walking away.) Oh, go tell that to the marines! (At the door.) Don't forget your wife, Andrei.

Klesch.—All right, all right!

Pepel.—Fine girl, that!

Bubnov.—Not so bad!

Pepel.—But what has she against me? She repulses me; but she's bound to be ruined here, nevertheless.

Bubnov.—She'd certainly be ruined by you.

Pepel.—Why by me? I pity her.

Bubnov.—Like the wolf pities the lamb——

Pepel.—It's not so. I really pity her. Life is hard here.

Klesch.—Just wait till Vasilisa catches you talking to her.

Bubnov.—Vasilisa! there's a shrew for you; she can take care of her prey!

Pepel.—Go to the devil, all you prophets!

Klesch.—Wait! You'll see!

Luka.—(Singing in the kitchen.) "On a dark night the pathway can't be seen."

Klesch.—(Going toward the entry.) Another howler!

Pepel.—I'm sad, and yet I don't know why. Life runs on regularly, even happily, and yet all of a sudden I feel as if I were chilled to the marrow; I'm sad.

Bubnov.—You're sad, eh?

Pepel.—That's right.

Luka.—(Singing.) "Hey, the pathway can't be seen."

Pepel.—Say, there, old man!

Luka.—(In the doorway.) Speaking to me?

Pepel.—Yes, to you. Don't sing.

Luka.—Don't you like it?

Pepel.—Yes, when it's well done.

Luka.—You mean that I sing badly?

Pepel.—That's what I mean.

Luka.—There you see now! And I thought my singing was good. That's just the way it always happens; people think their acts good, when suddenly they discover that others think them bad.

Pepel.—(Laughing.) That's true.

Bubnov.—You say you're sad, and yet you laugh?

Pepel.—What's that to you, bird of ill-omen!

Luka.—Who's sad?

Pepel.—I am.

Enter the Baron.

Luka.—There you are again. Out yonder in the kitchen a young woman is reading a book and crying—yes, actually shedding tears. I asked: "What are you crying about?" She replied: "I pity them." "Who?" "The people in the book." Amusing herself, if you please! Probably because she's sad also.

Baron.—No, that's stupidity.

Pepel.—Have you had your tea, Baron?

Baron.—Yes, what of it?

Pepel.—Would you like me to buy a small bottle for you?

Baron.—Sure! What then?

Pepel.—Then get down on your hands and knees and bark like a dog.

Baron.—What for, you idiot? Are you a rich merchant or merely drunk?

Pepel.—Bark, I tell you, bark! That'll amuse me. You're a baron, and there was a time when you didn't consider the rest of us hardly human.

Baron.—Well, what of it?

Pepel.—Now I'm going to make you bark like a dog, and you'll do it; come now, you'll do it, won't you, Baron?

Baron.—Well—yes, I'll do it, you blockhead! But what possible pleasure can that be to you, now that I realize myself that I have fallen lower than you? You should have tried to make me walk on all fours when I was your better.

Bubnov.—Well said!

Luka.—Well said, indeed!

Bubnov.—What has been, has been, and nothing remains. There are no lords here—that's all wiped out—nothing remains but man—naked man.

Luka.—Which means that we're all equal. So you've been a baron, have you, brother?

Baron.—Who's this fellow?

Luka.—(Laughs.) I've seen before now a count and some princes, but this is the first time that I have ever seen a baron—a baron gone to the dogs too!

Pepel.—(Laughing.) Baron, I'm ashamed of you!

Baron.—It's time you had a little more sense in your head, Vaska.

Luka.—Ha! ha! I look at you brothers and say to myself: Akh, what a life you lead!

Bubnov.—Such a life that no sooner are eyes open than howling begins.

Baron.—'Twas better once. Now I, for example, have seen the time when I took my coffee in bed—coffee with cream, too, I want you to understand!

Luka.—Nevertheless, we're all merely men—human beings. In vain we clothe the naked or pretend to be this or that. We're born merely human beings, and merely human beings we die. To my mind man is constantly growing more keen of mind and—more amusing. Ever living worse and worse, yet always aspiring after better things; the mule!

Baron.—And you, old man, what are you?

Luka.—I?

Baron.—A tramp?

Luka.—We're all tramps; travellers upon this earth. I am told that even the earth itself travels in the skies.

Baron.—(Sternly.) Yes, that's true—but have you a passport?

Luka.—(After a pause.) And are you—a spy?

Pepel.—(Joyously.) Good! good, old man! Did that cut you, Baron?

Bubnov.—Well, the Baron didn't steal it.

Baron.—(Confused.) I was—only joking, old man. I've no papers myself.

Bubnov.—That's a lie.

Baron.—I mean, I've papers, but they're good for nothing.

Luka.—They're all good for nothing. Papers don't make a man.

Pepel.—And now, Baron, let's go to the dram-shop.

Baron.—At your service. Old man, you're a rascal!

Luka.—There are so many, my dear fellow.

Pepel.—(In the doorway.) Say, aren't you coming?

(He and the Baron leave.)

Luka.—Is it really true that he was a baron?

Bubnov.—Who knows? Certainly he was an aristocrat. That shows from time to time—he isn't entirely rid of his former habits.

Luka.—Yes, nobility is like small-pox; you may be cured, but the scars always remain.

Bubnov.—But he's not such a bad fellow—only breaks out occasionally as he did, for instance, about your passport.

Enter Alushka half drunk, carrying an accordion and whistling.

Alushka.—Hey, there, lodgers!

Bubnov.—What are you yelling about?

Alushka.—Beg pardon! Excuse me! I'm a polite man, I am.

Bubnov.—On another spree?

Alushka.—Oh, after a fashion. Just now they kicked me out of the police station, saying: "Get off the street, do you understand?" I'm a man of character, I am. My master he's a drunkard, he is; and I'm a man that wants nothing; understand, nothing. If you want to, you can buy me all complete for one ruble and twenty kopecks. (Nastya comes out of the kitchen.) Offer me a million, I wouldn't want it. I want nothing. But what a shame for a good fellow like me to have a drunkard for a master.

(Nastya stands near the door and gazes at Alushka, shaking her head.)

Luka.—(Good naturedly.) You're talking to hear yourself talk.

Alushka.—How am I worse than the others? They told me to get off the street; but I'll show them! I'll go stretch right out in the middle of it. Let 'em run over me; what do I care; I don't want anything.

Nastya.—Poor fellow! and still so young.

Alushka.—(Seeing her, falls on his knees.) Mam'selle, speakee Frenchee? I've been on a little spree——

Nastya.—(In a loud whisper.) Vasilisa's coming!

Vasilisa.—(Suddenly opening the door, to Alushka.) You here again?

Alushka.—Good-day—pray come in.

Vasilisa.—I've told you already never to put your foot inside the door again, you blackguard; and yet you're here?

Alushka.—Vasilisa Karpovna, wouldn't you like me to play you a funeral march?

Vasilisa.—You're too young to be barking after me. Come, get out! (He runs out.) Bubnov, he mustn't come in here any more, understand?

Bubnov.—I'm not his keeper.

Vasilisa.—I don't want to know what you are. But don't forget that you're living here on charity. How much do you owe me?

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) I haven't figured it up.

Vasilisa.—Well, look out! I'm going to figure it up.

Alushka.—(Yells through the half open door.) Vasilisa Karpovna, I'm not afraid of you. (Runs away. Luka laughs.)

Vasilisa.—And who are you?

Luka.—A traveller.

Vasilisa.—Here for the night only, or to stay awhile?

Luka.—I'll see.

Vasilisa.—Your passport?

Luka.—It'll be furnished.

Vasilisa.—Give it to me.

Luka.—I'll bring it to you.

Vasilisa.—A traveller? You'd better say a vagabond; that would be nearer the truth.

Luka.—(Sighing.) You're not very considerate, little mother.

(*Vasilisa* gradually gets over to *Pepel's* door. *Alushka* looks in at the kitchen door and asks in a loud whisper:)

Say, has she gone away yet?

Vasilisa.—(Turning round.) You still here? (*Alushka* runs off whistling. *Luka* and *Nastya* laugh.)

Bubnov.—(To *Vasilisa*.) He isn't there.

Vasilisa.—Who?

Bubnov.—Vaska.

Vasilisa.—Did I ask you anything about him?

Bubnov.—I saw you were looking around everywhere for——

Vasilisa.—I was looking around simply to see if everything was in order, understand? Why, haven't they swept yet? How many times have I ordered that the place must be kept clean?

Bubnov.—It's the actor's turn to sweep.

Vasilisa.—I don't care whose turn it is. But if the inspectors come and fine me, I'll kick you all out.

Bubnov.—(Calmly.) Then what will you live on?

Vasilisa.—Everything must be kept in order. (Goes toward the kitchen. To *Nastya*.) What are you doing here? What swelled your eyes all up? What are you standing there like a dunce for? Go sweep. Have you seen *Natasha*? has she been here?

Nastya.—I don't know—I haven't seen her.

Vasilisa.—*Bubnov*, has my sister been here?

Bubnov.—She brought him. (Pointing to *Luka*.)

Vasilisa.—(Pointing to *Pepel's* room.) And was he here then?

Bubnov.—Vaska? Oh, yes, *Natasha* was talking to *Klesch*.

Vasilisa.—I didn't ask you who she was talking to. What muck—muck everywhere! Oh, you hogs! Remember everything must be cleaned up. (Leaves.)

Bubnov.—What a ferocious beast, that woman!

Luka.—She takes things seriously.

Nastya.—Such a life would make anyone ferocious. Tied to such a husband as she has, too.

Bubnov.—Oh, she's not tied very tightly.

Luka.—And is she always like that?

Bubnov.—Always. She came to find her lover, but he wasn't here.

Luka.—That, of course, vexed her. Oh, how many, many people there are that try to make others afraid of them! Yet disorder reigns—and impurity.

Bubnov.—Still it's necessary to sweep. *Nastya* suppose you—

Nastya.—Not much! How long have I been your servant? (After a pause.) Oh, I just feel as if I'd like to get drunk to-day—dead drunk!

Bubnov.—Well, that's one way of passing the time.

Luka.—But what has made you so thirsty, my daughter? A little while ago you were crying, and now you want to drink.

Nastya.—Well, what of it? I should get drunk and then I should cry some more; that's all.

Luka.—But why? Not even a boil comes without a cause.

Nastya.—(Shakes her head and is silent.)

Luka.—What will become of the people! But I'll sweep. Where's the broom?

Bubnov.—Behind the door in the entry. (*Luka* leaves.)

Bubnov.—*Nastya*, why is *Vasilisa* so angry at *Alushka*?

Nastya.—Because he says that *Vaska* has had enough of her, and would like to replace her by *Natasha*. Oh, I'm going to leave here.

Bubnov.—Why so?

Nastya.—I've had enough. I'm one too many here.

Bubnov.—You'll be one too many everywhere; every person is, on this earth. (*Nastya shakes her head and goes out through the entry.*)

Enter *Medvedev*, followed by *Luka* with the broom.

Medvedev.—I don't seem to know you.

Luka.—Then you do know all other men?

Medvedev.—In my quarter I have to know everybody—but I don't seem to know you.

Luka.—Well, you see, uncle, the reason is, all the earth isn't contained in your quarter—some portions are left outside. (*Goes into the kitchen.*)

Medvedev.—(*To Bubnov.*) It's true that my quarter is not as large as some others, but it's more troublesome. Just now I took that shoemaker, *Alushka*, to the station-house. He was flat on his back in the middle of the street, playing his accordion and yelling at the top of his voice: "I don't want anything. I ask nothing." There were lots of wagons and a devilish confusion. He was liable to be crushed at any moment, so I ran him in. A troublesome fellow, an amateur in disorder. And *Vaska*?

Bubnov.—Just the same.

Medvedev.—Noticed anything between him and *Vasilisa*?

Bubnov.—Anything; what do you mean?

Medvedev.—Oh—like—in general— Perhaps you know but won't tell—but since everybody knows. (*Severely.*) Now don't lie, brother.

Bubnov.—Why should I lie?

Medvedev.—Everybody's talking about it; but, after all, I'm only her uncle, not her father.

Enter *Kvasnya*.

Kvasnya.—*Bubnov*, do you know that *Medvedev* again asked me to marry him!

Bubnov.—Well, why not? He's got money and is still sturdy.

Kvasnya.—No, thank you. I tried it once; that's enough. A woman might just as well throw herself into the river in cold weather as take a husband.

Medvedev.—Wait to judge. All husbands are not the same.

Kvasnya.—But I'm always the same. When my dear husband croaked, I remained home an entire day to ask myself if my happiness was really true.

Medvedev.—If your husband beat you—without reason—you should have complained to the police.

Kvasnya.—I complained to God Himself for eight years, but entirely in vain.

Medvedev.—Now, it's forbidden to beat wives. Now, it's order and severity—we beat now only to insure order.

Luka.—(Entering with Anna.) Well, we've got here. Poor woman, are you, so feeble, allowed to walk alone? Where is your place?

Anna.—(Pointing.) Thanks, grandfather.

Kvasnya.—There's a married woman for you; look at her!

Luka.—A feeble little woman! I saw her dragging herself along in the entry, leaning against the wall and moaning. Why do you let her go alone?

Kvasnya.—Excuse our neglect, little father. Her maid must have gone out for a stroll. (Laughs.)

Luka.—You laugh, and yet she is a human being; and a human being of whatever condition is always of value.

Medvedev.—Yes, we must watch over her—if she should die all of a sudden what a——

(Sounds of a struggle and cries are heard coming from the entry.)

Medvedev.—I must see what's the matter. Oh, deuce take police duty! Why separate people when they fight? They'd stop when they were exhausted. Then they wouldn't begin again so soon.

Kostylev.—(Opens the door violently and shouts.) Abram, come! quick! Vasilisa is murdering Natasha—Come!

(Kvasnya, Medvedev and Bubnov run into the entry.

Luka, shaking his head, follows them with his eyes.)

Anna.—O God! Poor Natasha!

Luka.—Who is fighting there?

Anna.—The mistresses; two sisters.

Luka.—And do they have to share?

Anna.—Oh, no; they're both healthy—overfed.

Luka.—And what's your name?

Anna.—Anna. When I look at you, I can't help thinking how much you resemble my father—you, also, are kind and tender.

Luka.—I've been long and severely beaten by life; that's why I'm tender. (He laughs sadly.)

ACT II.

Scene the same. Night. On the shelf-like bunks near the stove, Satin, the Baron, Zhob Krivoy and the Tartar are playing cards. Klesch and the actor are looking on. Bubnov, on his bunk is playing checkers with Medvedev. Near Anna's bed Luka sits on a stool. The room is lighted by two lamps.

The Tartar.—One more hand and we've finished.

Bubnov.—Come, sing, Zhob. (Sings.) "The sun rises and sets"——

Zhob.—(Follows.) "But my cell is always somber."

The Tartar.—(To Satin.) No monkeying; we know what you are!

Bubnov and Zhob.—(Together.) "Day and night the sentinels watch me through the winder."

Anna.—Blows—insults—that's all I have——

Luka.—There, there, my poor woman, don't torment yourself!

Medvedev.—Where are you moving? Watch yourself!

The Tartar.—(Shaking his fist at Satin.) What are you hiding that card for? Oh, I saw it! I saw it!

Zhob.—Drop it, Hassan—let up; they're bound to get the best of us—

Anna.—I cannot remember ever having had enough food to satisfy my hunger. I trembled over each crumb—trembled for fear that I was eating more than my share. I've been in rags all my wretched life. Yes, in rags. Why?

Luka.—There, there, my daughter! You're tired. Courage!

The Actor.—(To Zhob Krivoy.) The devil! Play the Jack.

Baron.—And we have the King.

Klesch.—Somehow they always win.

Anna.—And now I'm dying.

Klesch.—Look! look! (To the Tartar.) Prince, throw up the cards; throw them up, I say!

Baron.—Look out, Andrei, that I don't throw you—to the devil!

Klesch.—(Shaking his head, goes over to Bubnov.)

Anna.—And I'm always thinking: Good God! is it possible that I must forever suffer in the other world too? Suffer forever there too? Is it possible?

Luka.—No, no, my dear, make yourself easy! You'll be at rest there! Courage! Everyone in this world suffers—each in his own way. (Rises and walks rapidly into the kitchen.)

Bubnov.—(Sings.) "Watch as I may."

Zhob.—(Follows.) "I cannot flee." (Together.) "Oh, to break my chains, for I long to be free!"

The Tartar.—(Who has continued to play. Shouts.) That's it! hide the card up your sleeve!

Baron.—(Confused.) Well, where would you have me hide it; up your nose?

The Actor.—(Persuasively.) Prince, you're mistaken. No one here ever—

The Tartar.—I saw it. Swindler! I'll play no more.

Satin.—(Picking up the cards.) Give us a rest, Hassan. That we're swindlers, you've known for ever so long. Then why play?

Baron.—He's lost forty kopecks, and makes noise enough for three rubles! And he's a prince, too!

The Tartar.—(Indignantly.) You ought to play honestly.

Satin.—What for?

The Tartar.—What for? You ask what for?

Satin.—Yes, certainly; what for?

The Tartar.—And you don't know?

Satin.—No; and you—do you know? (The Tartar, furious, spits. The others laugh.)

Zhob.—(Good-naturedly.) What a freak you are, Hassan! Come, now; can't you understand that if they began to live honestly they'd die of hunger inside of three days?

The Tartar.—That's none of my business; they ought to live honestly just the same.

Zhob.—(Singing.) "Oh, my chains, my chains!" Come, Hassanka. (They leave, Zhob singing and the Tartar shaking his fist at the Baron.)

Satin.—(To the Baron, laughing.) So, your excellency, you've put your foot in it again, have you? You, an educated man, and don't know even how to juggle a card up your sleeve without being caught! Educated, too!

The Actor.—He lacks talent—faith in himself; and without that——

Satin.—Winnings, fifty-three kopecks.

The Actor.—The three kopecks for me. But why, after all, do I need three kopecks?

Luka.—(Coming in from the kitchen.) Well, you cleaned up the Tartar? Going out to drink now, I suppose.

Baron.—Come with us.

Satin.—I'd really like to see you full.

Luka.—I should be no better than I am now.

The Actor.—Come on, old man; I'll recite some verses for you.

Luka.—Verses! What for?

The Actor.—It's amusing—sometimes sad.

Satin.—Say, there, verse-spouter, are you coming? (He and the Baron leave.)

The Actor.—Go on; I'll catch up. Now, here's a poem, old man—— (Rubs his forehead.) But I've forgotten how it begins. Before my organism was poisoned by alcohol, I had an excellent memory; but now—I'm done for. I always recited that poem with great success—thunders of applause. You don't know what applause is—ah! it's like brandy, brother. When I came out I posed like this. (Strikes an attitude.) And then—— (A pause.) No, I can't remember it—not a word. My favorite poem, too. That's bad, isn't it—very bad, old man?

Luka.—It's certainly not good when we forget what we love. All our soul is in that which we love.

The Actor.—I have drunk my soul, old man—I'm ruined, brother. Know why? Because I had no faith. I'm ruined.

Luka.—There, there; you must be cured. They cure drunkenness to-day, brother—cure, free of charge. There's a special hospital for drunkards. They've recognized, you see, that a drunkard is also a man—a human being. And hence they're satisfied if he will only come to be cured. So go there.

The Actor.—(Thoughtfully.) Where?

Luka.—Why, in a city—what's it called? I'll tell you directly. Meanwhile, prepare yourself—abstain. Be courageous—restrain yourself—then you'll be cured and can begin life anew. Wouldn't that be fine, eh, brother, to start a new life? Come, decide; one, two——

The Actor.—(Smiling.) Start a new life—yes, that would be fine! (Laughs.) Oh, yes, I can—I can, can't I?

Luka.—And why not? Man can do anything; he needs but to will.

The Actor.—(As if awakening from a dream.) What a jollier you are, old man! Meanwhile, good-bye. (Whistles.) Good-bye. (He leaves.)

Anna.—Grandfather, tell me something.

Luka.—(Going to her.) All right; what is it, dear?

(Klesch, after looking all around, goes toward his wife and makes signs to her as if he wished to tell her something.)

Luka.—What do you want, brother?

Klesch.—(In a low voice.) Nothing. (He goes slowly toward the entrance door, remains there a few seconds in silence, then goes out.)

Luka.—(After watching Klesch.) Tormented by your husband?

Anna.—I don't think about him any more.

Luka.—Did he beat you?

Anna.—Oh, how much! He's the cause of my—

Bubnov.—My wife had a lover— My, how that rascal could play checkers!

Medvedev.—Ahem!

Anna.—Grandfather, talk to me, please. I'm so tired—perplexed.

Luka.—Don't worry; it's nothing but death coming on—and that's nothing, dear. Hope! When you're dead, then you'll be tranquil. You will no longer need anything nor fear any one. Calm, tranquillity and rest will be yours. Death alleviates. Death, we are told, is rest; and that is true, my dear, for where on earth can rest be found?

Pepel enters, somewhat intoxicated. He sits on a bunk near the entry door, sad and silent.

Anna.—And over yonder, as here, is there suffering also?

Luka.—None, my dear; none, I tell you. Have faith—rest and nothing else. They will lead you before the Lord and say: "Lord God, here is your servant, Anna——"

Medvedev.—(Severely.) How do you know what they'll say up there?

(Pepel raises his head and listens at the sound of Medvedev's voice.)

Luka.—Evidently because I do know, corporal.

Medvedev.—(Conciliatory.) Well—of course—after all, it's your affair—although I'm not really corporal yet.

Bubnov.—I jump two.

Medvedev.—Oh, the rascal!

Luka.—Then the Lord God will look at you with tender, pitying eyes, and say: "I know this Anna; take her to paradise, that she may rest—I know that her life has been hard—that she is very tired—let her rest."

Anna.—(Breathing with difficulty.) Grandfather—ah, you're good! Oh, if it were like that! Not to feel anything—to rest——

Luka.—You'll feel nothing—nothing. Have faith! Die without fear—with joy. Death to us, I tell you, is like a mother to her little child.

Anna.—But—perhaps—I may—get well.

Luka.—(Smiling.) What for? To suffer more?

Anna.—But still—to live—just a little—while. If—over yonder—there is—no suffering—I can be—patient here—a little longer.

Luka.—Rest, and simply nothing else.

Pepel.—(Rising.) That may be true, and then again it may not be true.

Anna.—(Frightened.) O God!

Luka.—Oh, it's you, is it, charming youth!

Medvedev.—Who's making all that noise?

Pepel.—(Advancing toward Medvedev.) I am. What of it?

Medvedev.—Well, because you're noisy without any reason. A man ought to conduct himself properly.

Pepel.—Brute! and he calls himself an uncle, too. Ha! ha!

Luka.—(To Pepel, in a low voice.) See here, don't yell so. This woman is dying—her lips are already discolored—don't disturb her.

Pepel.—I won't, for your sake, grandfather. You're a good fellow! You lie so beautifully—tell such agreeable fairy tales—that's good!—there are so few agreeable things on this earth.

Bubnov.—Is the woman really dying?

Luka.—She don't seem to be joking about it.

Bubnov.—Then she'll stop coughing—she coughs too much—I take two.

Medvedev.—Devil take you!

Pepel.—Abram.

Medvedev.—I'm not Abram for you.

Pepel.—Abramo, is Natasha sick?

Medvedev.—That's none of your business.

Pepel.—No; but tell me, did Vasilisa beat her badly?

Medvedev.—That's none of your business, either. It's a family affair. And what are you to us?

Pepel.—Whatever I am, if I wished, you would never see Natasha again.

Medvedev.—(Stopping his play.) What did you say? Who are you talking to? My niece?—with you? Oh, you thief!

Pepel.—Thief, if you like; but not yet caught by you, understand!

Medvedev.—Just wait! I'll catch you, all right—before long, too.

Pepel.—Well, if you do take me, woe betide your nest here! Do you think I'd keep still before the judges? Better count on a wolf being amiable! They'd ask me: "Who incited you to steal? Who showed you where?" "Mikhail Kostylev and his wife," I should answer. "Who bought the stolen objects?" "Mikhail Kostylev and his wife."

Medvedev.—No one would believe you.

Pepel.—Yes, they would believe me, too; because it's the truth, and I'd get you into it, also—ha! I'd ruin you all, devils that you are! You'd see!

Medvedev.—(Troubled.) You lie! You know you're lying! And, besides, what harm have I done you, mad dog?

Pepel.—What good have you done me?

Luka.—Bravo, bravo!

Medvedev.—(To Luka.) What are you croaking about? Any of your business, is it? This is a family affair.

Bubnov.—(To Luka.) Drop it! It's not for us the noose is being prepared.

Luka.—(Humbly.) I'm not interfering. I'm saying simply that he that does no good to his fellow-man does ill.

Medvedev.—(Who failed to understand.) That's it! Here we all know each other—but who are you? (He leaves.)

Luka.—The officer got hot, didn't he? Oh, my brothers, I see that affairs here are very much mixed up.

Pepel.—He has gone to complain to Vasilisa.

Bubnov.—You act like a fool, Vaska! Don't you know that fool-hardiness is in season only when we go into the forest to gather mushrooms? It's of no account here—they'll promptly twist your neck.

Pepel.—Pshaw! We fellows of Yaroslav are not taken so easily, even if our hands are empty; we know how to defend ourselves.

Luka.—Nevertheless, my son, you would do better to go away.

Pepel.—Go away? Where? Tell me.

Luka.—To Siberia.

Pepel.—Oh, no! I prefer to wait till I'm sent there at the expense of the government.

Luka.—No, go now, I tell you. There you can make your way. They need just such fellows as you are.

Pepel.—My way has been decided once for all. My father spent practically all his life in prisons—I inherited the way—from a little boy up I have been called thief, son of a thief—

Luka.—What a beautiful land, Siberia! A land of gold! There he that has strength and brains is like a cucumber under glass.

Pepel.—Say, old man, what are you always lying for?

Luka.—What?

Pepel.—Are you deaf? I asked why you're always lying.

Luka.—What do you think I'm lying about?

Pepel.—About everything! According to what you say, we'll be well off here, better off there—all lies! But why do you tell them?

Luka.—Well, you'd better believe me, and then go see for yourself—you'll thank me—why suffer here? Besides, what

need have you to hear truth? Come, reflect a moment! Truth, perhaps, would prove to be but a club for you.

Pepel.—So much the worse! Nevertheless, hurrah for the club!

Luka.—But, you foolish fellow, why bring unhappiness down upon your own head?

Bubnov.—What rigmarole are you fellows getting over? I don't seem to catch on. What truth have you any need for, Vaska? What would you do with it? You know the truth about yourself—we all do.

Pepel.—Oh, listen! Don't chime in; let him talk. Tell me, old man, does God exist? (*Luka smiles and is silent.*)

Bubnov.—Men exist—like chips of wood that float on the river—

Pepel.—Come, tell me, is there a God?

Luka.—(In a low voice.) If you believe, there is; if you don't believe, there isn't. Everything in which we believe exists—

Pepel.—(Looks at the old man in silent astonishment.)

Bubnov.—Well, Pepel, I'm going out to drink my tea. Coming?

Luka.—(To Pepel.) Why do you look at me that way?

Pepel.—You mean—that—

Vasilisa.—(Meets Bubnov going out as she is coming in.) Is Nastya in?

Bubnov.—No. (He leaves.)

Pepel.—Ah, you here!

Vasilisa.—(Going toward Anna's bed.) She's still alive?

Luka.—Don't disturb her.

Vasilisa.—And what're you doing here?

Luka.—I can go away, if you like.

Vasilisa.—(Going toward Pepel's room.) Vaska, I want to talk to you.

(Luka goes to the entry door, opens and closes it with a bang. Then tip-toes back, climbs upon a bunk, and from there gets on top of the stove.)

Vasilisa.—(Calling from Pepel's room.) Vaska, come here.

Pepel.—I don't want to.

Vasilisa.—What's the matter? Are you mad?

Pepel.—Oh, I'm tired of all this—

Vasilisa.—Tired of me, too?

Pepel.—Yes, tired of you, too. (*Vasilisa draws her fichu more tightly across her breast. Then peeps cautiously within the curtains of Anna's bed and returns to Pepel.*) Well, speak out.

Vasilisa.—What can I say? It's not my nature to beg for love. Thanks for the truth.

Pepel.—What truth?

Vasilisa.—Why, that you're tired of me. Isn't it true?

Pepel.—(Looks at her in silence.)

Vasilisa.—(Going near him.) Why do you look at me that way?

Pepel.—(With a sigh.) How beautiful you are, *Vasilisa*! (She puts her hand on his neck, but he draws away.) Yet I never loved you. We've been intimate, it's true, but I was never pleased—

Vasilisa.—(In a low voice.) Well—then—

Pepel.—Then nothing more need be said on the subject. Go away.

Vasilisa.—You've got your eye on another?

Pepel.—That's none of your business. If I did have my eye on another, I wouldn't call on you to make the match.

Vasilisa.—(Significantly.) Why not? Perhaps I might be a great help to you.

Pepel.—(Suspiciously.) In what way?

Vasilisa.—You know well enough—why pretend not to? Vaska, I'm frank. (In a still lower voice.) I shall not try to conceal that you've offended me. Without rhyme or reason you've stung me as with a whip. You've been saying you loved me, and now all of a sudden—

Pepel.—Not all of a sudden—for a long time. The trouble is, you're heartless; and a woman needs a heart. You see, we

men are wild beasts and must be tamed. Now, what have you done to tame me?

Vasilisa.—What has been, has been—I know man isn't master of his feelings. Since you no longer love me—well—so be it.

Pepel.—Then, that's enough! Let's separate quietly, without any fuss.

Vasilisa.—Here, wait a moment! While with you, I had hoped that some day you would help me to get out of this muck; that you would rid me of my husband—of my uncle—of all this cursed existence. And, perhaps, after all, Vaska, it was not really you that I loved, but this hope in you, this dream. Understand, I was waiting for you to pull me——

Pepel.—You're not a nail nor am I pincers! And I, also, had hoped that you, so intelligent, so clever—for you are intelligent and——

Vasilisa.—(Leaning toward him.) Vaska, come, now, suppose we were to help each other——

Pepel.—How?

Vasilisa.—(Low, but forcibly.) My sister—pleases you—I know it.

Pepel.—And so you beat her cruelly! Take care how you touch her!

Vasilisa.—Wait; don't get mad! Everything can be arranged decently. Would you like to marry her? I'll give you money, besides—three hundred rubles. Even more, when I can get them together.

Pepel.—(Drawing away.) A moment! How so? What for?

Vasilisa.—Rid me—of my husband. Unloosen this yoke of misery from my neck.

Pepel.—Ah! that's it, is it? Prettily schemed, that, very! The husband put to bed with a shovel, the lover in Siberia, and you——

Vasilisa.—Not so fast, Vaska! Why in Siberia? You needn't do it yourself; you've companions. And even if you did—who'd know it? Just think—Natasha and the money! You could go away somewhere—it wouldn't make my sister

mad to leave me. I can't bear the sight of her. I beat her so that I cry to think of it—and then I beat her again, and shall continue to beat her.

Pepel.—You ferocious beast! And you boast of it, too!

Vasilisa.—I don't boast, simply tell the truth. Just think, Vaska, you've been in prison twice already on account of my husband and his rapacity. He has fastened himself on me like a leech, and for four years, now, has sucked my life's blood. He ill-treats Natasha, too—calls her a beggar and worse. In short, he's a pest to all of us.

Pepel.—You scheme too well!

Vasilisa.—My words are very clear; no one but a fool could fail to understand what I mean.

(Kostylev opens the door cautiously, and quietly advances.)

Pepel.—(To *Vasilisa*.) Very well! Go away.

Vasilisa.—Think over it. (Seeing her husband.) Ah, it's you, is it? Were you looking for me?

(*Pepel* straightens up and looks at *Kostylev* startled.)

Kostylev.—Yes. And you two are here alone! Talking, eh? (Stamps his foot and shouts.) *Vasilisa*! Strumpet! Beggar! (He seems to be frightened at his own words.) O God, pardon me! You've made me sin again, *Vasilisa*. I've been looking for you everywhere. (He trembles.) It's time for us to go to bed. Again you've forgotten to fill the lamp. Beggar! Hussy! (He threatens her with trembling hands. *Vasilisa* walks toward the door, gazing at *Pepel* significantly.)

Pepel.—(To *Kostylev*.) Come, now, pack off! Pack off!

Kostylev.—(Loudly.) I'm master here! Pack off yourself, thief!

Pepel.—(In a hollow voice.) Get out, Mikhail!

Kostylev.—You dare! I'm the—I'll—

(*Pepel* seizes *Kostylev* by the neck and shakes him.

A noise is heard on the stove, and a prolonged yawn. *Pepel* lets go of *Kostylev*, who runs off into the entry shouting.)

Pepel.—(Climbing on a bunk.) Who's there? Who's on the stove?

Luka.—(Showing his head.) Beg pardon——

Pepel.—You!

Luka.—(Calmly.) Why, yes—oh, Lord!

Pepel.—(Closes the entry door and feels for the bolt, which he cannot find, to fasten the door.) Oh, devils! Come down, old man. (Brutally.) Why did you get up there?

Luka.—Where should I go?

Pepel.—But you went into the entry.

Luka.—Oh, the entry is too cold for an old man.

Pepel.—And you—heard?

Luka.—Why, certainly. I'm not deaf. Akh, my good fellow, how fortunate you are! how fortunate!

Pepel.—(Suspiciously.) Fortunate? Why?

Luka.—That I happened to be upon the stove.

Pepel.—And why did you happen, just now only, to make a noise?

Luka.—Well, I suppose on account of the heat—and your fortune. And then, too, I thought, What if this fellow should allow himself to be deceived, and kill the husband?

Pepel.—Yes, that might have happened. How I hate him!

Luka.—Yes, such things happen. Many are deceived that way.

Pepel.—(Smiling.) Perhaps you were deceived some time yourself.

Luka.—Now, listen, young man, to what I have to tell you. Fly from that woman. She will rid herself of her husband more cleverly than you can. Don't permit yourself to be deceived by her. Look! am I bald? Know why? Because of women. I have known more, perhaps, than I ever had hairs on my head; but this Vasilisa surpasses them all in villainy.

Pepel.—I don't know whether I ought to thank you, or if you, too——

Luka.—Say nothing. If there be one here that pleases you, take her and fly—fly far away.

Pepel.—(Sadly.) It is so difficult to judge people! Some are good and some are bad. I can't fathom them.

Luka.—What is there to fathom? Every man lives according to his heart—to-day good, to-morrow bad; and if this girl has won your heart, take her and fly. If not, go alone. You are young, and can easily find another at any time.

Pepel.—(Takes Luka by the shoulder.) No. Say, what is your object in telling me all this?

Luka.—Wait; let go! I want to look at Anna. It seemed just now that there was a little too much rattling in her throat. (He goes to Anna's bed, raises the curtain and touches her. Pepel watches him pensively.) Merciful Saviour! receive into thy arms thy servant Anna.

Pepel.—(In a low voice.) Is she dead?

Luka.—(In a low voice.) Her suffering is o'er. Where is her husband?

Pepel.—In a dram-shop, doubtless.

Luka.—We must inform him.

Pepel.—(Trembling.) I don't love the dead.

Luka.—Why should you love them? We must love the living. (They leave.)

(A moment or two of perfect quiet; then unsteady footsteps and muttering are heard coming from the entry.)

The Actor.—(Staggers in, shouting.) Say, old man, where are you? I recollect them now. Listen! (Staggers forward a few steps, strikes an attitude and tries to recite some lines. Natasha appears in the doorway.)

Natasha.—(Laughing.) Clown! You're full.

The Actor.—(Turning toward her.) Ah, 'tis you! And where is the old man—that dear old man? There don't seem to be any one here. Good-bye, Natasha. Good-bye, Natasha.

Natasha.—(Entering.) You haven't said good-day yet, and now you're saying good-bye.

The Actor.—(Barring her passage.) I'm going—going to leave, too. The spring will come, but I shall not be here.

Natasha.—Let me alone! Where are you going?

The Actor.—To hunt up that city and cure myself. You leave, too. "Ophelia, get thee to a nunnery"—understand? There is a hospital for the organisms, for the drunkards. A splendid hospital—a marble pavement—light—cleanliness—nourishment—all for nothing! Yes, a marble pavement! I shall find it and be cured, and be a new man. Natasha, in the theatre my name is Sverchekov-Zhavorzhzsky. No one knows it here—no one. Here I haven't any name. Can you conceive of that dishonor—to lose your name—when even the dogs on the street have names?

(Natasha, moving cautiously away from the Actor, goes to Anna's bed and looks in.)

The Actor.—Without names we're not men

Natasha.—Look! look! She's dead!

The Actor.—(Shaking his head.) It isn't possible—

Natasha.—(Drawing back.) But look! look!

Bubnov.—(In the doorway.) Look at what?

Natasha.—At Anna—she's dead.

Bubnov.—Which means that she won't cough any more. (He goes to Anna's bed, looks at the corpse a moment, then turns to his own bunk.) We must tell Klesch; this is his affair.

The Actor.—I'll go and tell him—that she has lost her name. (Leaves.)

Natasha.—(In the middle of the room.) Some day—I, too, shall—in a cellar—abandoned—

Bubnov.—(Arranging the ragged coverings of his bunk.) What's that?

Natasha.—Nothing—just talking to myself.

Bubnov.—Waiting for Vaska, eh? Some day he'll split your head open—your Vaska.

Natasha.—Well, after all, it matters little who does it. May as well be him as another.

Bubnov.—(Getting into his bunk.) Well, it's your business—

Natasha.—She's better off dead, of course; but it's pitiful, just the same. O God! why did she live at all?

Bubnov.—It's just the same with everybody. We're born, we live, we die. I shall die, also—and you, too. No use wasting any pity over it.

Enter Luka, the Tartar, Zhob Krivoy and Klesch, who, plainly bored, walks slowly behind the others.

Natasha.—Sh-h-h! Sh-h-h! Anna—

Zhob.—We've heard. Peace be with her, now that she's dead!

The Tartar.—(To Klesch.) We must carry her out—take her into the entry. Can't leave the dead here—this is where the living sleep.

Klesch.—(In a low voice.) We'll carry her out.

(They all go to the bed. Klesch looks at his wife over the shoulders of the others.)

Zhob.—(To the Tartar.) You're afraid she'll smell? Well, she won't—she dried all up while living.

Natasha.—My God! Not one word of pity—not one!

Luka.—What could you expect, my daughter? How can we pity the dead, when we have no pity for the living—when we have no pity for ourselves?

Bubnov.—(Yawning.) And the dead don't mind words, either. The sick, yes; the dead, no.

The Tartar.—(Going to his bunk.) You must notify the police.

Zhob.—Yes, that's obligatory. Klesch, have you notified the police?

Klesch.—No. She's got to be buried, and I have only forty kopecks.

Zhob.—Borrow—and we'll take up a collection, too; some can give five kopecks, some more. But above everything else, notify the police; if you don't, they'll think you killed her.

(He goes to his bunk.)

Natasha.—Well—now I'll dream about her; I always dream of the dead. It's so dark in the entry that I'm afraid to go alone.

Luka.—Fear rather the living.

Natasha.—Come with me, grandfather.

(She and Luka leave. A pause.)

Zhob.—Ah! Hassan, the spring will soon be here. It'll be warmer, more comfortable to live, then. Already the peasants must be getting their plows ready—getting ready to work—while we—— Hassan! He's snoring already, the cursed Mohammedan!

Klesch.—(Stupidly looking round.) What ought I to do now?

Zhob.—Why, go to bed and sleep—that's all.

Klesch.—And her—what—— (No one answers.)

Enter Satin and the Actor.

The Actor.—(Shouting.) Old man! Come hither, my faithful Kent!

Satin.—Miklukha-Maklai, the celebrated explorer has arrived. Hey, hey!

The Actor.—It is definitely decided. Where's the city? Where's the old man?

Satin.—Fata Morgana! The old man lied. There's nothing! No city! No hospital, nothing!

The Actor.—You lie!

The Tartar.—(Suddenly rising in his bunk.) Where's the landlord? I'm going after the landlord. It's impossible to sleep here. I want my money back. Dead people and drunkards! (He goes out hastily. Satin whistles.)

Bubnov.—(In a sleepy voice.) Go to bed; that's good fellows. Don't make a noise—the night's to sleep.

The Actor.—Oh, yes—there's some one dead here——

Satin.—(Shouts.) The dead don't hear—they can't understand. Shout, howl as much as you like—the dead won't hear!

(Luka appears in the doorway.)

ACT III.

A court-yard with rubbish scattered about. In the rear a high brick wall which shuts out the sky. On the right the high,

blank, discolored side of a frame stable. On the left the stone wall of the building in which is Kostylev's night-lodging house. Between this building and the rear wall a narrow passageway. In the stone wall are two windows, one level with the ground, the other two metres above. The beginning of spring, about sunset. Natasha and Nastya are sitting side by side on a log. Luka and the Baron are on a sled. Klesch is stretched out on a pile of wood near the stable. Bubnov's face can be seen in the cellar window.

Nastya.—(With closed eyes, accentuating her words with her head.) Then at night he came into the garden, into the pavilion, as had been agreed upon between us. I had already been waiting for him a long while, and was trembling from fear and chagrin. He was trembling also, and was white as chalk. He had a revolver in his hand——

Natasha.—(Eating seeds.) There, you see! That proves how true it is that students are rattle-brained fellows.

Nastya.—And then he said to me, in a terrible voice, "My dearest love——"

Bubnov.—Ho, ho! Dearest love!

Baron.—Oh, let up! If it doesn't please you, don't listen; but don't annoy those who want to lie. And then?

Nastya.—He said: "My dearest love, my parents won't give their consent to our marriage. They even threaten to curse me because of my love for you; hence I must," he said, "put an end to my sad existence." And his revolver was immense—loaded with ten bullets. "Good-bye," he said; "my decision is irrevocable. I cannot live without you." And then I answered: "My never-to-be-forgotten friend Raoul——"

Bubnov.—(Surprised.) What's that? Raoul?

Baron.—(Laughing.) Come, come, Nastya! The last time it was Gaston.

Nastya.—(Jumping up.) Shut up, wretches! You vagabond dogs! Can you understand love—true love? I have felt true love. (To the Baron.) And you, you miserable wretch! An educated man who claims to have taken his coffee in bed!

Luka.—There, there! Don't insult each other. Respect the human being. The important thing is not what is said, but why it's said. Continue your story, my daughter.

Bubnov.—Spread out your peacock plumes, jay.

Baron.—Yes, yes, go on. And then?

Natasha.—Pay no attention to them; it's envy; because they've nothing worth telling in their lives——

Nastya.—(Sitting down.) No, I don't want to. I'll tell no more, because they don't believe—they laugh—— (Suddenly she stops, and then, after a short pause, closes her eyes and continues her story, accentuating the words with her hands, as if she heard far-away music.) And then I answered: "Joy of my life, star of my nights, I cannot live without you, either, because I love you and shall continue to love you as long as my heart beats in my breast. But," I said, "don't throw your life away; preserve it for the sake of your parents, whose only joy you are. Leave me; better that my life should be thrown away through love for you; for, after all, what does it matter, since I am good for nothing—good for nothing?"

(She covers her face with her hands and cries bitterly.)

Natasha.—Don't cry. Don't cry. No use to cry.

(*Luka*, smiling, gently strokes *Nastya's* hair.)

Bubnov.—(Laughing.) Oh, you daughter of the devil!

Baron.—(Laughing also.) Say, grandfather, perhaps you think that all happened? Why, every word came out of that old novel "The Fatal Love." Bosh! Every word of it bosh!

Natasha.—Well, what's that to you? Shut up! You've fallen so low that you no longer count.

Nastya.—(Furious.) You infernal wretch! Have you no soul?

Luka.—(Taking her by the arm.) There, there! Let's leave them, my daughter. Don't get angry—I know—I believe. Truth is yours, not theirs. If you believe that you have truly loved, then you have truly loved. Yes, you have truly loved. And don't get angry at him, your bedfellow—perhaps it's jealousy that makes him laugh—perhaps he has had nothing real in all his life. Come, let's go.

Nastya.—(Placing her hand over her heart.) Grandfather, I swear it happened—I swear. It was a student—a Frenchman named Gaston—with a black cap and patent-leather shoes. Oh, may thunder strike me if it's not true! And oh, he loved me! how he loved me!

Luka.—I understand. I believe it. With patent-leather shoes, you said? Well, well! And did you love him so very much, too?
(He and Nastya leave.)

Baron.—What a silly thing, that girl! Good-hearted, but silly!

Bubnov.—Why are human beings so fond of lying—lying just as if they were being questioned in court?

Natasha.—Evidently because lies are more agreeable than truth. I also——

Baron.—Well, what do you do also?

Natasha.—I invent also—and expect——

Baron.—What?

Natasha.—(Confused, but smiling.) I don't really know. I say to myself, to-morrow some one will come, some one worth coming; or something will happen, something worth happening. I've been expecting for ever so long, but in reality—what could I expect?
(A pause.)

Baron.—(Smiling.) There's nothing to expect, and I expect nothing. For me, everything has happened—it's over and done for. Let others expect!

Natasha.—Well, now I imagine that to-morrow I shall die suddenly—and my blood freezes in my veins. It's well in summer to imagine death—when there are heavy thunder storms, you may be killed suddenly.

Baron.—I see that you haven't led a happy life. Of course, on account of your sister, with her devilish disposition——

Natasha.—And whose life is happy? Every one suffers; it's easily seen that no one——

Klesch.—(Who until this moment has been lying quietly, rises suddenly.) No one, you say? That's a lie! If no one lived happily, we could be more patient—our life would be more tolerable.

Bubnov.—What's the matter with you? What makes you howl?

(*Klesch* lies down on the planks again, growling.)

Baron.—I must go and make up with *Nastya*—if not, she won't give me any money to buy vodka.

Bubnov.—It's really curious how people love to lie. Of course, in *Nastya's* case it's easily understood; she's accustomed to paint and powder; she smears them on her face, and naturally she likes to smear them on her life as well; but why the others? Why, for instance, does *Luka* lie so much—and without any benefit to himself? An old man, too; why does he do it?

Baron.—(Laughing.) All lives are dull and gray, so every one likes to use a little rouge.

Luka.—(Entering.) Why do you torment that poor girl so much, *Baron*? Let her cry, since it amuses her. She cries purely for pleasure. What does it matter to you?

Baron.—But it's so stupid. She makes me tired. One day it's *Raoul*, the next *Gaston*, and so over and over again. However, I'm going to make up. (Leaves.)

Luka.—Caress her. It's always well to cherish any human being.

Natasha.—Oh, but you're good, grandfather! Why are you so kind?

Luka.—Kind, did you say? Well, if you think so—(There is heard, coming from behind the brick wall, a song with an accordion accompaniment.) Some one, my dear, must needs be kind—have a little pity for others. Christ pitied every one, and commanded us to do likewise. And it is well, I assure you, to do so in time. For instance, once I had charge of the country house of an engineer at *Tomsk*. The house was in the woods—a lonely spot—and in winter I was entirely alone, but very comfortable. Now, one time I heard some one breaking in.

Natasha.—Robbers?

Luka.—Yes. I took my gun and went out. Two men were trying to force a window, and so occupied with their task that they failed to notice me. I shouted, "Begone! March!" They

would have attacked me with an axe, but I was too quick, threatening first one and then the other with my gun. They fell upon their knees, begging mercy. But I was very angry, on account of the axe, you know. "Devils!" I shouted, "when I wished to drive you away, you were not willing to go; now I want one of you to get some good, stout switches." Then I made each in turn give the other a sound thrashing. When they had finished, they said: "For God's sake, grandfather, give us a piece of bread! We've had nothing to eat." That's why they were robbing, my dear. (He laughs.) Really, they were two excellent rascals. Then I asked, "Why didn't you say so at once?" "Because we're tired of begging and begging," they replied, "and never receiving anything." They remained with me all winter. One, Stepan by name, took my gun and hunted in the forest; the other, Yakov, was sick all the time—did nothing but cough. When spring came they said good-bye and travelled off into Russia.

Natasha.—They were escaped convicts—felons?

Luka.—Yes, that's what they were—kind-hearted muzhiks; and who knows, had I not shown them pity, perhaps they would have murdered me. And then 'twould have been court-room, prison and again Siberia! To what end? Neither the prisons nor Siberia teach us to be good; but man may, man may. (A pause.)

Bubnov.—I don't understand lying! Then what's the use? Tell me the truth—truth as it really is.

Klesch.—(Jumps up as if he had been touched with fire, and shouts.) Truth? what truth? where is truth to be found? (He shakes his rags about him.) Here's truth: no work, no strength! Here's truth: I've not even a hole to crawl into; I've nothing left but to die. Here's truth! The devil! What good is truth to me? Give me a chance to breathe! What am I guilty of? Why favor me with truth? Life is impossible! Here's truth for you!

Bubnov.—How fiery he is!

Luka.—Heavenly Father! See here, my son. You—

Klesch.—(Trembling with passion.) You're talking of truth; and you, old man, are always consoling everybody.

Well, I'll tell you the truth. I hate you all! Damn truth! understand? damn it!

(He runs away.)

Luka.—The poor man! How excited he is! Where is he going?

Natasha.—He acts like a crazy man.

Bubnov.—He got it off well, didn't he? He acted as if he was in a theatre. He gets that way sometimes. He hasn't got used to life yet.

Pepel.—(Entering.) Peace to all the company! Well, *Luka*, malicious old man, still telling fairy tales?

Luka.—Had you but heard the heart-rending cries of a man——

Pepel.—Do you mean *Klesch*? What's the matter with him? I met him just now, running like a madman——

Luka.—Perhaps you would run, also, if your heart were as full——

Pepel.—(Sitting down.) I don't like him—he's too ill-natured—too proud. (Mimicking *Klesch*.) "I'm a worker." Every one else he thinks beneath him. Work if you like, if it pleases you, but there's nothing to be proud of about it. And if a man is to be appreciated according to the work he does, then a horse is the better animal. The horse works and says nothing. *Natasha*, are your folks home?

Natasha.—They've gone to the cemetery, and from there they expect to go to vespers.

Pepel.—That's why you have a little leisure—something rare!

Luka.—(Thoughtfully, to *Bubnov*.) You were speaking of truth. Truth is not a remedy for all the ills of life, nor will it always restore health to the diseased spirit. For instance, I once knew a man who believed in a land of truth—a land of justice.

Bubnov.—In what?

Luka.—In a land of truth. "Somewhere," said he, "there must be a land inhabited by an exceptional race who respect and mutually aid one another—and with them all goes well." Now, this man was always getting ready to go in search of

that land. He was poor, lived badly; but even in his worst moments, when his strength was nearly at an end, he never lost courage. "'Tis nothing," he would say, with a smile; "it will pass. I shall be patient yet a little while, and then I shall abandon this dog's life and shall go into the land of truth." It was his single hope—his only joy.

Pepel.—Well, did he go?

Bubnov.—Where? Ha, ha, ha!

Luka.—And then one day there arrived—he was in Siberia—an exile, a man of great learning, with many books and charts. Then our man begged the savant to show him the land of truth and point out the way to it. The savant opened his books, unfolded his charts and searched and searched, but no land of truth could be found anywhere. There, mapped out, lay the whole earth; but the land of truth—nowhere.

Pepel.—(Low.) Well, then, there is none.

(Bubnov bursts out laughing.)

Natasha.—Wait! Well, grandfather?

Luka.—But our man wouldn't believe the savant, and said: "There must be one. Search more carefully! If not, what good are all your books and charts?" The savant, offended, exclaimed, "My books and charts are true; there is no land of truth." That made our man furious. "What!" he said, "I have lived and suffered in vain all this time! A belief in its existence has been my whole faith, and now, all of a sudden, you and your maps declare there is no such land! Stop, thief! Stop, thief! You a wise man? No, no—a scoundrel! a thief!" And then our man blacked the savant's eyes, and (a pause) went home and hung himself. (All are silent. Luka smilingly regards Pepel and Natasha.)

Pepel.—(In a low voice.) The devil! Your story is not merry!

Natasha.—He couldn't stand lies.

Bubnov.—Still fairy tales, every one of them!

Pepel.—And so no land of truth has been found—

Natasha.—'Twas sad for the poor fellow!

Bubnov.—Fairy tales! I tell you. Well, well, a land of truth! Ha, ha! (He disappears from the window.)

Luka.—(Nodding his head toward the window.) He laughs, poor fellow! (A pause.) Well, my children, I trust that you may live happily. I shall soon leave you.

Pepel.—Where are you going?

Luka.—To Little Russia. I understand that the Ukrainians have discovered a new religion—I want to look into it. Ah, man, man! Always searching—searching for something better! May God lend his aid!

Pepel.—Do you think he'll find it?

Luka.—Man? Certainly. He that seeks, finds. He that wills persistently, finds.

Natasha.—Ah, if man had but found something already! If he had but invented something!

Luka.—He'll find or invent, never fear! only it's necessary to help, my daughter.

Natasha.—How can I help? I, so helpless myself——

Pepel.—(Decisively.) Listen, Natasha; I wish to ask you once more—here, before him; he knows everything—to come with me.

Natasha.—Where? To prison?

Pepel.—I've already told you that I'll steal no more. On my word of honor, I'm done. I know how to read and write, and I'll work. He tells me that in Siberia one can do well. Shall we go? Do you think that I do not abhor this life? Ah! Natasha, I see—I know. It consoles me that others who steal more than I are honored—but it's not enough. While I don't repent, not believing in conscience, I feel a desire to live differently, to live better. A man ought to live in such a way that he can respect himself.

Luka.—Very true, my son. May God help you! True, indeed, a man ought to respect himself.

Pepel.—From childhood I have been a thief. I've always been called, by everybody, "Vaska the thief, Vaska the son of a thief," and so—well, here I am a thief! Comprehend clearly that I am a thief, probably through spite; that I am a thief because no one ever deemed it worth while to call me anything else. And you, Natasha, shall be the first to name me otherwise, if you will. Will you?

Natasha.—(Sadly.) To tell the truth—I no longer believe—in words. And to-day I'm anxious and depressed—as if some misfortune were about to happen. You have chosen a bad time to speak of this matter.

Pepel.—When shall I speak, then? This is not the first time—

Natasha.—Why should I go with you? For love? I don't love you very much. At times you please me; at others I don't even care to look at you. That seems to prove that I don't love you. True love is blind to the defects of the loved one—and I see—

Pepel.—You'll love me, never fear. You'll get used to me—just consent. 'Tis now more than a year since I began watching you. I saw that you were steady, serious—a girl to be depended upon—and I began to love you with all my heart.

(Vasilisa, in holiday attire, appears at the window and listens.)

Natasha.—Yes, you began to love me—and my sister?

Pepel.—(Confused.) Well—well—there are many like her.

Luka.—That doesn't matter, my daughter; if one cannot get thrushes, he eats blackbirds.

Pepel.—(Sadly.) Have pity on me! Such a life as mine is not worth living. I sink deeper and deeper in the mire, and struggle in vain, since everything that I have clutched at is rotten. You mentioned your sister. I did, indeed, think that she—wasn't— If she hadn't been so hungry for money, I would have done anything for her—if she had only been satisfied with me alone. But no, she wanted other things—wanted money and freedom—freedom to live ill. She couldn't help me. But you, like a young pine tree, would prick, but support me.

Luka.—I also say, take him, my girl, take him; he's not a bad fellow; only be sure and recall to his mind as often as possible that he is good, in order that he may not forget it—and he'll believe you. Just say: "Vaska, you're good; now, don't forget it!" Think of what you may make of another, and of what may become of him, if you do not go! Your sister is a ferocious beast; of her husband we had better say noth-

ing. And then this life! While Vaska is strong and clever. Where will you go otherwise?

Natasha.—I've nowhere to go—I see—I know it. Only I have no confidence in any one. Truly, I don't know where to go.

Pepel.—There is but one other road open to you—but I shall not allow you to take it—I'll kill you first.

Natasha.—(Smiling.) Well, well, I'm not yet your wife, and already you want to kill me.

Pepel.—(Embracing her.) Oh, come now, *Natasha*!

Natasha.—(Embracing him.) All right. I've but one thing to say, *Vaska*, and I call upon God to witness my words: The first time you thrash me or injure me in any other way, I shall have no pity upon myself nor upon any one else. I shall either hang myself or—

Pepel.—May my arm wither if I touch you!

Luka.—Never fear, my daughter! He has more need of you than you of him.

Vasilisa.—(At the window.) Good, good! Kindly receive my congratulations upon the betrothal!

Natasha.—Oh, they've come back! Oh, Lord, they've seen us! Oh, *Vaska*!

Pepel.—What are you afraid of? No one will dare touch you now.

Vasilisa.—Don't be afraid, *Natasha*. He won't trounce you. He knows neither how to trounce nor how to love—I know something about it.

Luka.—(Low.) Akh! what a viper, that woman!

Vasilisa.—He's brave—in words.

Kostylev.—(Entering.) *Natasha*, what the mischief are you doing here, lazybones? Complaining about your relatives? And the samovar isn't ready, nor even the table cleared.

Natasha.—(Walking away.) But you intended going to church—

Kostylev.—It's none of your business what we intended to do! You must do what we order you to!

Pepel.—Stop! She isn't your servant any longer. Natasha, don't go—don't do anything.

Natasha.—(To *Pepel.*) Don't you order me about—it's a little too soon yet. (Leaves.)

Pepel.—(To *Kostylev.*) That will do! You've mistreated her quite enough! She's mine, now.

Kostylev.—Yours? When did you buy her? How much did you pay? (Vasilisa bursts out laughing.)

Luka.—Vaska, you'd better leave.

Pepel.—Look out, you laughers! Look out you don't end in tears!

Vasilisa.—Akh, akh! 'Tis frightful! I'm so afraid!

Luka.—Go away, Vaska; don't you see that she is trying simply to provoke you?

Pepel.—Oh, yes—but she deceives herself. (To *Vasilisa.*) It shall not be as you wish—

Vasilisa.—Nor shall it be as I do not wish, Vaska.

Pepel.—(Shaking his fist at her.) We'll see! (He leaves.)

Vasilisa.—(Leaving the window.) I'll make preparations for the wedding!

Kostylev.—So—you're leaving, I understand, old man?

Luka.—It's time.

Kostylev.—Where are you going?

Luka.—Where my eyes lead me.

Kostylev.—To tramp, eh? Don't suit you, then, to stay in one place?

Luka.—Water under a fixed stone don't run, they say.

Kostylev.—A stone, yes—but a man ought to be fixed—settled somewhere. People can't be allowed to live like cockroaches—to run about wherever it pleases them. A man ought to settle down, and not tramp the highways.

Luka.—But if a man feels at home everywhere?

Kostylev.—Then he's a vagabond—a useless fellow. A man must be useful—must work.

Luka.—Really?

Kostylev.—Why, yes—and if not, what? What is a pilgrim? A man unlike others. If he's learned something new—something useless—some truth, perhaps; for, look here, it's not good to tell all truths—yes, let him keep it to himself—let him keep his mouth shut—or else speak in such a way that no one will understand him. He ought to want nothing and disturb no one. It doesn't matter to him how people live; his duty is to live a righteous life in the woods or in a cave, invisible to everybody—without disturbing any one, without judging any one, but praying for all—for all the sins in the world—for yours, for mine, for everybody's. That's what he flees from the vanities of this world for—to pray. (A pause.) And you—what kind of a pilgrim are you? No passport! Every honest man has to have a passport—every one.

Luka.—There are men and men—

Kostylev.—Don't try to be smart! Don't try to spring any conundrums on me. I'm no more stupid than you are. What do you mean by men and men?

Luka.—No conundrum about it. I say there are sterile fields, and fertile ones where all that is sown sprouts. That's what I say.

Kostylev.—But why do you say it?

Luka.—Now, take your own case for example. Suppose that God himself said to you, "Mikhail Ivanovitch, be a man!" Do you think you'd change? Such as you are you'd remain.

Kostylev.—Akh! Don't you know that my wife's uncle is a policeman, and that if I wished—

Vasilisa.—(Entering.) Mikhail, come get your tea.

Kostylev.—(To Luka.) And this is what I've got to say to you: Get out of this house!

Vasilisa.—Yes, old man, get out! Your tongue is too long! And then, who knows? perhaps you are an escaped convict.

Kostylev.—See that you march yourself off this very day. If not, take care!

Luka.—You'll call the uncle? Well, call him. How fortunate! Here's an escaped convict; arrest him, and the uncle will be rewarded—he'll get at least three kopecks!

Bubnov.—(In the window.) Who's that they're selling for three kopecks?

Luka.—Why, they want to sell me.

Vasilisa.—(To her husband.) Come.

Bubnov.—For three kopecks? Look out, old man, they'd sell you for one!

Kostylev.—(To Bubnov.) Where did you spring from, like the devil out of a box?

Vasilisa.—What a lot of riff-raff and mysterious persons there are in the world!

Luka.—Good appetite!

Vasilisa.—(Turning round.) Hold your tongue, rotten mushroom!
(She and her husband leave.)

Luka.—I'm leaving to-night—

Bubnov.—That's the best thing you can do. It's well to leave in time. I know—I probably saved myself from hard labor in Siberia by leaving in time.

Luka.—Is that so?

Bubnov.—Yes; you see, my wife had been trolloping with my workman. The rascal was a good hand, I admit; he could dye cats and dogs into expensive furs in a way that was truly astonishing. Well, he and my wife got so intimate that I expected every day to be poisoned. Then I began to beat my wife, and in return he began to beat me, and he thumped mighty hard! One time he pulled half my beard out by the roots, and broke a rib; then I began to get mad myself, and so one day I cracked my wife's head with an iron bar! Oh, it was war! However, I saw there was nothing in it for me—that they had the upper hand; and so I made up my mind to do her up once for all. But, fortunately for me, I reflected in time, and skipped.

Luka.—That was the best thing to do.

Bubnov.—But the shop was in my wife's name, and I remained—what you see! But, to tell the truth, I should have lost the shop anyway, because, you see, I loved drink.

Luka.—Akh, that love for drink!

Bubnov.—When I begin to bend my elbow I would sell everything—even my skin. And then, I'm lazy—it's astonishing how I love not to work.

Enter Satin and the Actor, disputing.

Satin.—Bosh, bosh! You won't go anywhere. Say, old man, what silly cock-and-bull story have you been stuffing into this fellow's head?

The Actor.—You lie! Grandfather, tell him he lies. Yes, I shall go. I've worked to-day—sweeping the streets—and I haven't touched a drop, either. See, here's the thirty kopecks, and I'm sober.

Satin.—That's stupid—nothing else. Give them to me, and I'll drink them up, or play cards.

The Actor.—Hands off! This is for the trip.

Luka.—(To Satin.) Why do you try to drag him down?

Satin.—Tell me, sorcerer, favorite of the gods, what fate has life in reserve for me? I've lost much—but everything isn't lost, since there are cleverer tricksters than I in this world.

Luka.—You're merry!

Bubnov.—Hey, there! Actor, come here.

(The Actor goes to the window and talks in a low voice with Bubnov.)

Satin.—I was jolly when I was young. It's pleasant to remember. I danced well and played in the theatre. I loved to make folks laugh. 'Twas a happy time!

Luka.—Then how came you here?

Satin.—How inquisitive you are, old man! You want to know everything. What for?

Luka.—I would fain comprehend the acts of men—and I don't comprehend you. You're gallant, not at all stupid, and yet—

Satin.—The prison, grandfather—I spent four years and seven months there; and after prison, all roads are barred.

Luka.—Akh! But why were you put there?

Satin.—On account of a good-for-nothing fellow. In an angry fit I killed him. I learned to play cards in prison.

Luka.—Why did you kill him? Some woman at the bottom of it?

Satin.—My own sister. But drop it! I don't like to be questioned. It happened long ago—and my sister is dead—nine years already. Ah, I had a fine little sister!

Luka.—Yet you're not huffed at life; whereas the locksmith—a while ago—how he howled, poor fellow!

Satin.—Who? Klesch?

Luka.—Yes, Klesch. "No work!" he howled, "nothing!"

Satin.—Oh, he'll get used to it. What shall I do with myself?

(Klesch comes in slowly, with bowed head.)

Satin.—Say, widower, what's the matter with you? What are you trying to concoct?

Klesch.—I'm thinking what I shall do. I've no tools; the funeral swallowed everything.

Satin.—Let me give you a pointer—just do nothing.

Klesch.—No use talking! I'd be ashamed to let people see me.

Satin.—Pshaw! Those very same people are not in the least ashamed to let you live worse than a dog. Now, look here. Suppose you stop working, and I, and hundreds of thousands of others—in fact, everybody—what would happen?

Klesch.—We'd all starve to death.

Luka.—(To *Satin*.) You ought to address that sort of talk to the "Rovers"—for there's a sect by that name—

Satin.—I know it; they're idiots, nevertheless, grandfather.

(Natasha's cries are heard coming from Kostylev's window.)

Natasha.—What are you beating me for?

Luka.—(Uneasily.) That's Natasha's voice. Are they—

(There is a noise of breaking crockery, and then Kostylev's sharp voice is heard.)

Kostylev.—Heretic! Strumpet!

Vasilisa.—(Behind the scenes.) Wait, wait! I'm coming! I'll—

Natasha.—(Behind the scenes.) Help, help! They're killing me!

Satin.—(Shouting in the window.) Hey, there, you!

Luka.—(Excitedly.) Vaska must be called. My God! Hurry!

The Actor.—(Running out.) I'll go, I'll go!

Bubnov.—They're trouncing her a little too often, now!

Satin.—Come, old man, we'll be witnesses.

Luka.—(Following *Satin*.) I'd be a poor witness. Better call Vaska; quickly!

Natasha.—(Behind the scenes.) Sister, little sister! Go-o-o!

Bubnov.—They've gagged her! We must go and see.

(The noise gradually grows less and less. Evidently they have gone from the room into the entry. Then *Kostylev* is heard to shout.)

Kostylev.—Shut it!

(A door bangs. Perfect silence follows. It is now dusk. *Klesch*, meanwhile, has remained indifferent on the sled, rubbing his hands. He begins to mutter, indistinctly at first, then:)

Klesch.—But I've got to live—I've got to have a shelter somewhere, at least. And I've got nothing—I'm all alone, and I don't know where to go for help.

(He rises and goes off slowly, with head bowed down. On the stage some seconds of sinister silence. Then a gradually increasing noise, a chaos of sound is heard; finally individual voices can be distinguished.)

Vasilisa.—(Behind the scenes.) Well, she's my sister—

Kostylev.—(Behind the scenes.) What right have you to—

Vasilisa.—(Same place.) Jail-bird!

Satin.—(Same place.) Quick, call Vaska! Thump him, Zhob!
(A policeman's whistle is heard.)

Zhob.—(Entering.) My, what a whack I gave him!

Medvedev.—(Running after Alushka.) Stop! give me that whistle!

Kostylev.—(Running in.) Abram, catch him! He has killed——

(Enter Kvasnya and Nastya, supporting Natasha. Satin comes in backward, warding off Vasilisa, who is trying to strike her sister. The Tartar, with his arm in a sling, a number of vagabonds, men and women in rags, follow.)

Satin.—(To Vasilisa.) Hold on there, you cursed hawk!

Vasilisa.—Clear out, you gallows bird! I'll tear her apart, if I die for it!

Kvasnya.—(Helping Natasha to one side.) There, now; that's enough, Vasilisa! Aren't you ashamed to make such a beast of yourself?

Medvedev.—(Seizing Satin.) Ah, I've caught you!

Satin.—Zhob, jump him! Vaska, Vaska!

(All except Natasha crowd round.)

Pepel.—(Arrives running, pushes the crowd aside.) Where's Natasha? where is she?

Kostylev.—(Seeking protection in a corner of the wall.) Abram, seize Vaska! Oh, my brethren, help us to arrest Vaska, the thief, the robber!

Pepel.—Akh, you old devil!

(He strikes Kostylev, who falls in such a position that the upper portion of his body is hidden by the corner of the wall. Pepel runs to Natasha.)

Vasilisa.—Beat him to a jelly, my friends! Beat the thief!

Medvedev.—(Shouting at Satin.) What business have you to mix yourself up in this affair? This is a family matter—between relatives. And what are you?

Pepel.—(To Natasha.) What did they strike you with? a knife?

Kvasnya.—The wild beasts! They scalded her feet!

Nastya.—They upset the samovar on her!

The Tartar.—Perhaps it was an accident. We mustn't accuse them unjustly

Natasha.—(Almost fainting.) Vaska—take me—hide me somewhere.

Vasilisa.—My God! Look, look! He's dead—they've killed him.
(They crowd around Kostylev.)

Bubnov.—(Low.) Vaska, the old man's cooked——

Pepel.—(Looks without comprehending.) Run! Call! He must be taken to the hospital; I'll pay.

Bubnov.—I tell you the old man has broken his pipe.

(The noisy crowd is suddenly subdued, as a grate fire is quenched by water. Individuals in the crowd murmur: "Is it possible?" "A pretty business!" "Let's get out!" "The devil!" "Let's go before the police get here!" The crowd diminishes. Bubnov, the Tartar, Nastya and Kvasnya go to the corpse.)

Vasilisa.—(Rises and shouts triumphantly.) My husband has been murdered—and here's his murderer! I saw him do it, my friends, I saw him do it! Police! Police!

Pepel.—(Leaving Natasha.) Let me—— (To the crowd.) Back! (Looks first at the corpse, and then at Vasilisa.) Well, are you satisfied? (Touches the corpse with his foot.) He's done for, the old dog! It's happened as you wished. Wouldn't it be well for me to do you up the same way? (He starts after her, but Satin and Zhob seize and hold him. Vasilisa runs out.)

Satin.—Come, come! Return to your senses!

Zhob.—Stop her!

Vasilisa.—(Reappearing.) Well, Vaska, friend of my heart. No one can evade his fate. Whistle, Abram! Police!

Medvedev.—But they've stolen my whistle, these devils.

Alushka.—Say, here it is!

(He whistles. Medvedev pursues him.)

Satin.—Don't be afraid, Vaska; murder in a squabble is nothing. That don't cost much!

Vasilisa.—Hold him! He killed my husband; I saw him do it!

Satin.—But I also struck the old man at least three times. He didn't need much to finish him. Call me as a witness, Vaska.

Pepel.—I've no need to justify myself. I intend to inculpate Vasilisa, and I shall do so. She begged me to kill her husband—begged me to do it.

Natasha.—(Suddenly, in a loud voice.) Oh, now I understand! That's it, is it, Vaska? Pretty people! They're leagued together, he and my sister. They have an understanding. So that's it, is it, Vaska? You talked to me a while ago so she could overhear it, did you? Pretty people! She's his mistress, you know—everybody knows it. They're leagued together. She instigated him to kill her husband—he was in their way, and I, also—and so they crippled me.

Pepel.—What are you saying, Natasha? What are you saying?

Satin.—The devil!

Vasilisa.—You lie, both of you! He, Vaska, killed him.

Natasha.—They're leagued together, I tell you. May both be damned!

Satin.—A great game! Look out, Vaska, they'll cut off your wind!

The Tartar.—That beats me! A pretty mess!

Pepel.—Natasha, is it possible that you really mean it? Is it possible that you believe I am in league with her?

Satin.—Good God! Natasha, reflect a moment.

Vasilisa.—(Invisible, speaking in the passageway.) My husband has been murdered, your honor—Vaska Pepel, the thief, is the murderer—I saw him, Mr. Commissary—everybody saw him—

Natasha.—(Excitedly.) Pretty people! My sister and Vaska murdered him! Police, listen! It was my sister that urged him on—that bewitched her lover. And he, the cursed creature, killed him. Seize them both. Try them—and put me in prison, too! For the love of God, put me in prison, too!

ACT IV.

Scene.—Same as Act I. The partition forming Pepel's bedroom is no longer there, however, and Klesch's anvil and tools are gone, but Klesch himself is seated at the table repairing an accordion. The Tartar is stretched out in a corner, and groans occasionally. Satin, the Baron and Nastya are at the far end of the room, before them a bottle of vodka, three bottles of beer and a loaf of black bread. Upon the stove the Actor moves and coughs. It is night. The room is lighted by a lamp placed upon the table. The wind howls outside.

Klesch.—Yes, during the mix-up he disappeared.

Baron.—He has flown from the police like smoke from fire.

Satin.—Or like the sinner from the righteous.

Nastya.—What a good old man he was! Whereas you others, you're not men—you're mildew!

Baron.—(Drinking.) To your health, my lady!

Satin.—Yes, a curious old fellow. Here's Nastya fallen in love with him.

Nastya.—Yes, just so—I did love him. He had seen everything—he understood everything——

Satin.—(Laughing.) And, generally speaking, he was to most people like the soft part of bread to the toothless.

Baron.—(Laughing.) Or a poultice to an abscess.

Klesch.—He had pity—while the rest of you have none.

Satin.—What earthly use would it be to you if I did pity you?

Klesch.—You might—if you did not pity—at least not offend.

The Tartar.—(Sitting on his bunk and rocking his wounded arm as if it were a child.) He was a good old fellow! He had the law in his soul——

Baron.—What law, prince?

The Tartar.—Not to harm your fellow-man.

Klesch.—(Trying the accordion.) It's still whistling, damn it! The prince is right. We must live according to the law—the law of the gospel.

The Tartar.—Mohammed gave us the Koran, saying: "This is the law; let thy deeds be according to what is herein written." But the time will come when the Koran will not be sufficient; and the new time shall lay down the new law; for each time has its own law.

Satin.—Exactly so! The time has come, and has given us the Penal Code. That's a solid law, I tell you! You won't use that up very soon!

Nastya.—(Striking the table with her glass.) Why do I live here with such as you? I'm going to clear out—going somewhere, anywhere—to the end of the world.

Baron.—Without shoes, lady?

Nastya.—Stark naked—on all-fours.

Baron.—Stark naked—on all-fours? Well that would be picturesque, indeed! Especially that all-fours business.

Nastya.—Yes, I'd crawl, provided that by so doing I should never again see your miserable mug! Akh! how disgusting it is, this life—you—everything!

Satin.—Now, when you leave, be sure to take the Actor along. He's preparing to clear out, too. He's learned that barely half a kilometer from the end of the world there's a hospital for the organons—

The Actor.—(Showing his head over the stove.) Organisms, you ass!

Satin.—For organons poisoned by alcohol.

The Actor.—Well, he'll go—you'll see.

Baron.—What "he," if you please, sir?

The Actor.—I.

Baron.—Thanks, servant of the goddess—what the mischief's her name? The goddess of the drama—of tragedy—what's her name?

The Actor.—Muse, you blockhead! Muse, not goddess.

Satin.—Lachesis—Atropos—Aphrodite—devil take you! It was the old man that swelled the Actor's head.

Baron.—A silly old fool!

The Actor.—Ignoramuses! Savages! Mel-po-me-ne! Heartless wretches! You'll see—he'll go—yes. He'll find his way to the place where there is no——

Baron.—No what, sir?

The Actor.—Nothing. (He declaims.) "This ditch shall be my tomb, I die feeble and decrepit." Why are you living? Why?

Baron.—Hey, there, "Kean," or "Genius and Dissolution!" Don't yell so.

The Actor.—Shut up! I shall yell.

Nastya.—(Raising her head and swinging her arms.) Yes, yell, so they'll understand you.

Baron.—Yell, apropos of what, my lady?

Satin.—Send them to the devil, Baron! Let them yell—split their heads open, if they want to—let them. Don't interfere with human beings, as the old man was accustomed to say. Yes, it was he, that old leaven, that has made our companions ferment.

Klesch.—He advised us to go to some beautiful, far-away place—but didn't show us how to get there.

Baron.—The old man is a charlatan!

Nastya.—You lie! You're the charlatan!

Baron.—Sh-h-h, sh-h-h, lady!

Klesch.—The old man didn't love truth—he expressed himself very strongly against it—and he was right. We can scarcely breathe, now. There's the prince. They crushed his arm working—and now it must be cut off. There's truth for you!

Satin.—(Pounding the table with his fist.) Silence! You're all beasts. It's not for the like of you to talk of that old man, blockheads! (More calmly.) Baron, you're worse than the rest; you understand nothing, and lie besides. The old man isn't a charlatan! What is truth? Man—that's truth; and that old man knows it, and you don't. I understood him. He did lie, it's true. He lied because he pitied you, devil take you! There are lots of people that lie because they pity their fellow-

men. I know it—I've read. They lie by inspiration—inspired by a desire to do good. There is the consoling lie—the conciliating lie—the lie that absolves the weight that has crushed the laborer's arm—the lie that indicts the starving. Oh, I know lies! The weak in spirit and those that subsist upon the blood of others need lies, and find them useful. They sustain the weak and cover the others; but he that is master of himself, that is independent, that is not filled with another's bread, has no need of lies. The lie is the religion of slaves and masters. Truth is the god of a free man!

Baron.—Bravo! Well said! I agree with you. You talk—like an honest man.

Satin.—And why shouldn't the trickster talk like an honest man, when honest men talk like tricksters? Yes, I've forgotten many things, but not all. The old man? He had a level head. He acted on me like acid on an old, dirty copper coin. Let's drink to his health!

(Nastya pours out a glass of beer and hands it to Satin.)

Satin.—(Smiling.) That old man thought for himself—lived the inner life. He looked at everything with his own eyes—the eyes of the spirit. One day I asked: "Grandfather, why do men live?" (Trying to imitate the voice and gestures of Luka.) "They live to make things better, comrade. For example, let us imagine a family of carpenters, where year after year not one is born out of the ordinary. But one day a carpenter is born, such a one as the world has never before seen. He stamps his personality upon the carpenter's art, and advances it twenty years at a stroke! Just so with all the others—shoemakers, locksmiths, all workmen, peasants and even the lords and masters themselves—all are living to better things. Each believes that he lives for himself, but he really lives for the betterment of humanity. People live, one generation succeeding another, perhaps for centuries, before the better man is born."

(Nastya gazes intently into Satin's face as he talks.

Klesch stops work and listens. The Baron, with bowed head, drums lightly on the table with his fingers. The Actor leans forward on the stove to listen.)

Satin.—Every one, my comrades, upon this globe, without a single exception, lives in the hope of better things; that's the reason we should respect every man; for we know not who he is, why he is born, or what he may do. Perhaps he has come upon this earth for our happiness—for our advantage. We should, above all, respect the youngsters. They especially need liberty and space. Respect the youngsters!

(A pause.)

Baron.—(Dreamily.) Yes—for better things—that recalls my family—an ancient race. In Catherine's time, nobles—warriors. Originally from France. They served the country well, and ever rose higher and higher. Under Nicholas I, my Grandfather, Gustave Deville, occupied a high position—had a great fortune—hundreds of serfs—horses, chefs——

Nastya.—You lie! 'twas never so!

Baron.—(Jumping up.) What?

Nastya.—'Twas never so!

Baron.—(Shouting.) A house at Moscow—another at Petersburg. Carriages with coats-of-arms——

(Klesch takes the accordion and goes to one side, watching the others.)

Nastya.—Lies!

Baron.—Shut up! I tell you, servants by the dozens——

Nastya.—(Joyously.) Not one!

Baron.—I'll murder you!

Nastya.—(Preparing for a scrap.) Not a carriage!

Satin.—Drop it! Nastya, don't irritate him!

Baron.—You just wait, vermin! My grandfather——

Nastya.—Not a grandfather—nothing! (Satin laughs.)

Baron.—(Beside himself with anger, drops on a bench.)
Satin, you tell this—strumpet—— What! you're laughing, too? You don't believe me, either? (He shouts in despair, pounding the table with his fist.) But it's true, devil take you!

Nastya.—(Triumphantly.) Ah! you're howling now, are you? Now you know for yourself how it feels not to be believed.

Klesch.—(Coming back to the table.) I thought they were going to fight.

Baron.—I won't permit you to jeer at me! I've proofs—documents—

Satin.—Oh, drop it! Forget your grandfather's carriages! You can't travel far in bygone carriages—

Baron.—But how dare she—

Nastya.—Just listen! How dare she?

Satin.—Well, you see she does dare. And in what respect is she worse than you, even if in her past there is not only no grandfather or no carriages, but not even a father or a mother?

Baron.—(Quieting down.) Devil take you, you reason coolly; whereas I haven't the character—

Satin.—Better go buy yourself some, then; it comes in handy. (A pause.) *Nastya*, are you going to the hospital?

Nastya.—What for?

Satin.—To see *Natasha*.

Nastya.—Have you just thought of her? Why, she left the hospital some time ago, and disappeared. She can't be found anywhere.

Klesch.—It will be curious to see which of the two shall succeed in doing the other most harm, *Vaska* or *Vasilisa*.

Nastya.—Oh, *Vasilisa* will get out of it all right, never fear! She's tricky; while *Vaska* will certainly be sent to *Siberia*.

Satin.—For murder committed in a quarrel, it's only imprisonment.

Nastya.—It's a pity! Hard labor in *Siberia* would be better. That's where every one of you ought to be sent. You ought to be swept away like ordure—into a cesspool.

Satin.—(Surprised.) What's the matter with you? Are you crazy?

Baron.—I'll just give her a few cuffs for her insolence.

Nastya.—You just try it!

Baron.—I'll more than try it!

Satin.—Leave her alone! You shouldn't ill-use a human being. I can't get that old man out of my head. (Laughing.) Wrong no human being. But what if I have been but wronged all my life? What shall I do—put up with it?—pardon it?

Baron.—(To *Nastya*.) Don't you understand that you're not my equal?

Nastya.—Akh! you wretch, don't you live on me like a worm in an apple? (Homeric laughter from all the men.)

Klesch.—The stupid thing! A spicy apple she is!

Baron.—It's no use to get offended at her. She's an idiot!

Nastya.—You laugh, do you? Well, you don't feel like laughing!

The Actor.—(Gloomily.) Oh, trounce her!

Nastya.—If I could, I would have—— (Picks up a bowl and smashes it on the floor.) That's what I would have done to you.

The Tartar.—Why break the crockery, you stupid woman?

Baron.—(Rising.) I won't stand it any longer. I can and I will——

Nastya.—(Running away from his blows.) Devil!

Satin.—(To *Nastya*.) Oh, shut up! Who's afraid of you? What's the matter with you, any way?

Nastya.—Wolves! I wish you all were dead! Wolves!

(She leaves.)

The Actor.—(Gloomily.) Amen!

The Tartar.—Akh! The vile Russian woman!—insolent—undisciplined! No Tartar woman would act that way! She knows better.

Klesch.—You must punish her.

Baron.—Carrion!

Klesch.—(Trying the accordion.) It's ready, but its owner don't come.

Satin.—Now let's take a drink.

Klesch.—Thanks—and then 'twill be time to go to sleep.

Satin.—Say, have you got used to us yet?

Klesch.—(After drinking, goes to his bunk.) Well, you see, after all, there are good people everywhere—although at first you may not see them; but when you come to look more carefully, you see that everywhere men are the same—some good, some bad.

(The Tartar arranges his bunk, then gets down on his knees and prays.)

Baron.—(Calling Satin's attention to the Tartar.) Look! look!

Satin.—Let him alone! He's a good devil. (He laughs.) I'm good myself to-day—I don't know why, I'm sure!

Baron.—You're always good when you've been drinking—intelligent, too.

Satin.—Yes, when I've been drinking, everything pleases me. He's praying? Good! Man can believe or not believe—that's his own business. Man is free—he pays for everything—for faith, for atheism, for love, for intelligence. Man pays for everything, and that's why he's free! Truth is man. And what is man? He is neither you nor I nor others. He is you and I and the old man and Napoleon and Mohammed and the others all in one. (He draws in the air the figure of a man.) Do you understand? He's immense. In him is each and every beginning and each and every end. All in man and all for man! Nothing exists but man—all the rest is the creation of his arm and of his brain. Ma-a-a-n! It's magnificent! sounds superb! Ma-a-a-n! He should be respected, not pitied; not humiliated by pity, but respected. Come, Baron, drink to man! (He rises.) It does one good to feel himself a man. I'm an assassin, a thief—just so. When I'm passing along the street, people avoid me, and often they cry, "Wretch! thief! go to work!" Work? What for? To eat? To gormandize? (He laughs.) I've always despised those that thought too much of their bellies. Man is above that; he is no belly-god!

Baron.—(Shaking his head.) You spout—that does you good—warms your heart; but I can't do it—don't know how. (Looking around him, then in a low and cautious voice:) I'm afraid, terribly afraid, sometimes—understand?—about what may come after——

Satin.—(Walking to and fro.) Cock-and-bull stories! Nothing can happen to man; he fears no one.

Baron.—But you see, ever since I can remember, there has floated in my noddle a sort of mist. I have never comprehended things. It seems as if I have done nothing all my life but change clothes. Why? I can't comprehend. I was a student, then I wore the uniform of the School for the Nobility. What did I learn? I can't recall. I married; then I wore a swallow-tail and, later, a dressing-gown. I married a bad woman. Why? I can't comprehend. I got rid of all my means, and then I wore a shiny sack coat and fringed pantaloons. How was I ruined? I can't comprehend. I got a job in the treasury, then I wore another uniform—a cap with a cockade, like my comrades. I robbed the State, and then I put on convict garb. At last, these rags—and all like a dream. Say, isn't it ridiculous?

Satin.—Not very. Rather stupid.

Baron.—That's true; but what was I born for, any way? There must have been some reason, hey?

Satin.—(Laughing.) Probably. Man is born to make things better. (Shaking his head.) Yes, that's it.

Baron.—I wonder where Nastya went. I must find out, because she's always—— (He leaves. A pause.)

The Actor.—Say, Tartar, prince! (The Tartar turns around.) Pray for me.

The Tartar.—(After a silence.) Pray for yourself!

The Actor.—(Comes down quickly from the stove, pours and drinks a glass of vodka, then goes out almost running.) I'm off!

Satin.—You? Where are you going?

(He whistles. Enter Medvedev and Bubnov, both somewhat intoxicated. Bubnov carries in one hand a paper of cracknels, in the other some dried fish. He has a bottle of vodka under his arm, while another bottle protrudes from his coat pocket.)

Medvedev.—The camel is a species of ass—an ass without ears.

Bubnov.—You're a species of ass yourself!

Medvedev.—The camel has no ears at all—he hears through his nostrils.

Bubnov.—(To Satin.) Friend, I've been looking for you in all the pot-houses. Take this bottle; my hands are full.

Satin.—Put your cracknels on the table, then you'll have an empty hand.

Bubnov.—That's so! (To Medvedev.) Look, you brute! There's an intelligent man!

Medvedev.—All thieves are intelligent. I know thieves—they couldn't get along without intelligence. A stupid fellow may be good, but a scoundrel must have a head on his shoulders. Now, as to the camel, you're dead wrong; he's a beast of burden—he has neither horns nor teeth—

Bubnov.—Where are all our people? Hello, there! Show yourselves! I'll treat! Who's in the corner?

Satin.—Won't you be through carousing pretty soon?

Bubnov.—Yes, pretty soon—I've got together only a small capital this time. Zhob! Where's Zhob?

Klesch.—(Coming to the table.) He isn't here.

Bubnov.—Hey, there, bulldog! Brrr, brrr! Baron, don't bark or growl! Drink! be merry! It's my treat—I'll treat everybody—I love to treat, you know. If I were rich, I'd start a free pot-house—devil take me if I wouldn't!—with music and song. Enter, drink, eat, listen to the music, take a snooze—everything free! Is a man wretched? Bring him to my pot-house. Satin, that's what I'd do—I'd give you half of my capital! That's the kind of a fellow I am!

Satin.—Well, then, give me all now.

Bubnov.—All my capital? Right away? Well, here you are! Here's a ruble, a twenty-kopeck piece—five—two—that's all.

Satin.—Very good! They'll be safer with me. I'll gamble with them.

Medvedev.—I'm witness. The money has been given for safe-keeping. How much was it?

Bubnov.—You're a camel! We need no witnesses.

Alushka.—(Enters, barefooted.) Friends, I got my feet wet.

Bubnov.—Well, then, come wet your whistle. But it's a bad thing to drink—bad for the health!

Alushka.—So I see by your actions! You don't act like a man except when you're drunk. Klesch, is the accordion repaired? (He plays, sings and dances.)

Bubnov.—(To Medvedev.) We need no witnesses, I tell you; and you're done for, any way, as a policeman—you're neither a cop nor an uncle.

Alushka.—Only the husband of Aunt 'Kvasnya.

Bubnov.—One of his nieces is in prison, the other dying.

Medvedev.—(Proudly.) You lie! She isn't dying; she has only gone away without leaving her address. (Satin laughs.)

Bubnov.—It doesn't matter; a man without nieces isn't an uncle.

Enter Zhob, followed by a number of vagabonds, men and women, who undress and lie down on the bunks.

Zhob.—Bubnov, where did you disappear to?

Bubnov.—Come here and sit down. We'll sing that favorite song of mine, you know.

The Tartar.—It's night. We want to sleep. Sing in the daytime.

Bubnov.—And your arm, prince—have they cut it off?

The Tartar.—No; I'll wait a while. Perhaps it won't be necessary. Arms are not iron, you know; it don't take long to cut them off

Zhob.—Well, Hassan, you're done for any way. Without an arm you're no account. They only value our arms and backs. No arm, no man! So you may as well come and drink vodka.

Kvasnya.—(Entering.) Good-evening, friends. My, how cold it is out! Is my wretch of a husband here? The brute!

Medvedev.—Here I am.

Kvasnya.—Got my jacket on again, too! and boozy besides! What does that mean?

Medvedev.—On account of the celebration—Bubnov's—and then the cold, the mud!

Kvasnya.—Look out for yourself! Pretty reason, the mud! Come, let's go to bed and get some sleep.

Medvedev.—Yes, sleep if we can—it's time.

(He goes into the kitchen.)

Satin.—You're a little rough on him.

Kvasnya.—It isn't possible to be otherwise with a man like him. I married him because I thought he, a military man, would be useful to me. You're such ardent fellows—and I'm a woman, you know. But now he has taken to drink, and that don't suit me.

Satin.—You've made a bad choice of a protector.

Kvasnya.—Where would I have found a better? You wouldn't live with me, would you? And even if you would, it wouldn't last a week; you'd lose me at cards, and all I have.

Satin.—(Laughing.) That's right! I believe I would.

Kvasnya.—So you see— Alushka! hey, Alushka!

Alushka.—Here I am.

Kvasnya.—What tales have you been spreading round about me?

Alushka.—Nothing but the truth. "There's a woman for you," I said, "a marvel! Blood and bones and fat, ten pud—but brains, not an ounce."

Kvasnya.—That's a lie! I've got brains enough. But why did you say I thrashed my husband?

Alushka.—Well, I thought you were thrashing him when you were dragging him around by the hair.

Kvasnya.—(Laughing.) You rascal! You might at least have pretended not to have seen. Why wash our dirty linen in public? Besides, your talk provoked him. It made him take to drink.

Alushka.—Then that saying is true, is it, that wet hens drink, also?
(Satin and Klesch laugh.)

Kvasnya.—You rascal! What sort of a man are you?

Alushka.—Of highest quality! Good for anything! Wherever my nose leads, I follow!

Bubnov.—(Beside the Tartar's bunk.) Come, now; since I won't let you sleep, we'll sing—all night, too; eh, Zhob?

Alushka.—And I'll accompany you.

Satin.—Go ahead!

The Tartar.—(Smiling.) Yes, go ahead, devil Bubnov! Pour out the vodka; we'll drink and have a jolly time! When death comes we'll die!

Bubnov.—Satin, pour it out. Zhob, sit down. Akh! my friends, man is content with so little! I, for example, have been drinking, and am quite content! Sing, Zhob, sing—the favorite. I'll drink and sing, and then—I'll cry.

Zhob.—(Sings.) "The sun rises and sets——"

Bubnov.—(Sings.) "But my cell is always sombre."

(The door is suddenly opened.)

Baron.—(In the doorway, shouts.) Hey, you! Come! All! Quick! Yonder—in that deserted field—the Actor—has hung himself!

(Silence. Every one looks at the Baron. Behind him appears Nastya with wide-open, staring eyes. She goes slowly toward the table.)

Satin.—(In a low voice.) Akh! He has spoiled our evening's fun—the imbecile!





